1991

Family Support for Persisters and Non-Persisters in Louisiana's Adult Basic Education Programs.

Geraldine Hargrove Holmes
Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

U·M·I

University Microfilms International
A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
313 761-4700 800 521-0600

Order Number 9219544

Family support for persisters and non-persisters in Louisiana's adult basic education programs

Holmes, Geraldine Hargrove, Ph.D.

The Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical Col., 1991

U·M·I
300 N. Zeeb Rd.
Ann Arbor, MI 48106

FAMILY SUPPORT FOR PERSISTERS AND NON-PERSISTERS IN LOUISIANA'S ADULT BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAMS

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The School of Vocational Education

by
Geraldine Hargrove Holmes
B.S., Louisiana State University, 1989
M.S., Louisiana State University, 1990
December 1991

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author would like to thank Dr. Barbara A. Holt, major professor, for the help she gave throughout this study. Her attitude and speediness in returning edited drafts were especially helpful.

To Dr. Joe W. Kotrlik, committee member, goes a very special thank you. His patience and research expertise proved to be immeasurable. Appreciation is also extended to Dr. Betty C. Harrison, committee member, who was always there when the author needed her. Dr. Harrison provided invaluable proofreading skills and her ideas were imaginative and thought-provoking. Acknowledgment is also extended to Dr. Vincent Kuetemeyer and Dr. S. Kim MacGregor, committee members, who were always there with needed boosts and suggestions. To Dr. Michael F. Burnett special gratitude is expressed for always maintaining an "open door." He was always willing to lend a helping hand by sharing his special skills, knowledge, and abilities.

To Julia Davis and Wanda Handy, special friends who never forgot an occasion, the writer wishes to express a special thank you for their encouragement and support. To the author's children and other family members and to the classmates, students, and co-workers (especially Fred Sanders, Sharon Huchinson, Sandra Cash, and Sharon

Buckert) that became her friends, she sends her love and gratitude for their confidence and help.

The most heartfelt appreciation is expressed to the author's husband, Oren. For without his love, support, encouragement, belief in her, and infinite patience, this dissertation would not have been possible. To him, the author dedicates the dissertation with her love.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

ABSTRACT

The role that family involvement and the effects of home efforts have on improved student achievement for children is well documented in the literature. The purpose of this study was to determine whether family support should be considered when planning adult basic education (ABE) programs. The objectives addressed were: demographic characteristics, level of family support, and relationship of family support among selected variables. A statewide random sample of 197 adult basic education students was surveyed (82.7% response rate).

Persisters (students who either completed the ABE program or were continuing their instruction when the study was conducted) and non-persisters (students who had dropped out of the ABE program) were studied. Variables examined included: selected demographic characteristics; persistence in ABE programs; the most important reason for entering the ABE program; employment status; and psychological, family responsibilities, and financial family support sub-components.

The majority of Louisiana's ABE students were single Black females living with their mothers. Most of the students who had dropped out of the ABE programs did so for financial reasons, and a large percentage of the

students were unemployed. The average age of the students was 28 years and their average family income was slightly above the national average poverty threshold. No significant relationships were found among gender, race, employment, and all of the reasons given for entering the ABE program except one. A significant relationship was found between persisters and non-persisters on the variable, "Get a job." Persisters were more likely to give this reason for entering the ABE program than were non-persisters.

The results of the study indicate that focusing on education to enhance career opportunities could be a determining factor in keeping adults in an educational setting. Ideas and suggestions were given for more research directions and for planners of ABE programs.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

"The apple doesn't fall far from the tree, they say. That old bit of wisdom... has become a force behind a growing movement in the field of adult literacy. It is driving new kinds of programs that approach illiteracy as a family affair and seek to break the chain that perpetuates it from generation to generation" ("Literacy begins," 1989, p. 3). Numerous programs, such as Project Head Start, the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), and Adult Basic Education (ABE) include literacy education for different ages and levels. The problems which have mounted with these programs have been mainly because of fragmentation and a lack of communication among programs (Balmuth, 1986; Booth, 1988; Bryk & Thum, 1989; Dorchester School District 2, 1990; "Literacy begins," 1989).

Since World War I, the United States has experienced unprecedented technological growth. This rapidly developing technology requires a literate society; yet according to some estimates 27 million adults in the United States, or one in five, lack the basic reading, writing, and computational skills needed to perform well in the average workplace (Gordon, Ponticell, & Morgan, 1989; McIlvoy, 1989; Pellegrino, 1988). Effective

educational programs are needed to combat these alarming statistics.

"Successful programs deal with the child as part of a family and with the family as part of a neighborhood and community" (Schorr, 1990, p. 502). Problems in nonparticipation and persistence plague adult basic education programs nationwide (Darkenwald & Gavin, 1987; Quigley, 1990; Valentine & Darkenwald, 1990). Garrison (1985) in his report, Predicting Dropout in Adult Basic Education Using Interaction Effects Among School and Nonschool Variables, stated that adult basic education students "are four times more likely to drop out than other adult education participants" (p. 25). "Literacy begins," (1989) indicated that children's programs have not yielded much better success, "... children's programs yielded only short-term cognitive gains that diminish without sustained follow-up" (p. 4).

The literature abounds with research on children and parental involvement and the effects of home efforts and improved student achievement (Beder & Valentine, 1990; Clark, 1987; Comer, 1984; Dulaney, 1987; Finn, 1989; France & Meeks, 1987; Jackson & Cooper 1989; McAdoo, 1989; McDermott, 1984; Rich, 1987; Schorr, 1990; Smith, 1984). Finn (1989) reported that high student achievement assumes parent participation. But even if there is parent participation the high illiteracy rate does not allow for

the assumption that parents have basic skills in reading and writing.

"Literacy begins," (1989) stated that "Low-literate families tend to reproduce themselves" (p. 3).

> When parents are poorly educated and dependent on public assistance, their children are likely to grow up to become dependent on public assistance; and thus begins a vicious cycle with adult illiteracy impacting the next generation.... Children of disadvantaged parents begin their school life behind their peers because parents with minimal or no reading and writing skills often cannot provide the support that these children need (Dorchester School District 2, 1990, p. 2).

Family Support

From reviewing the literature, there appears to be no consistent body of research available that directly addresses the role of family support and ABE students. However, public opinion and research literature does support the importance of parents and extended family members in the achievement of school children (Clark, 1987; Comer, 1984; Dulaney, 1987; Finn, 1989; France & Meeks, 1987; Jackson & Cooper 1989; Maclay & Askov, 1988; McAdoo, 1989; McDermott, 1984; Rich, 1987; Schorr, 1990; Smith, 1984).

Malcolm Knowles (1980), who for years has been recognized as an innovative leader in adult and continuing education, believes that there are no real differences in children and adults in their conditions for learning (p. 58). If this is so, then inferring from the known (research on children's literacy development) to the unknown (adult literacy development) may be an avenue to examine in seeking a unified theory of cognitive growth for both adults and children (Nickse, 1989, pp. 9-10).

Summary

"According to the results of the Current Population Survey, there were an estimated 83.9 million households in the United States in March 1983" (U. S. Department of Commerce, 1984, p. 1). Of these households, 73% were composed of families. "By Census definition, a family household requires the presence of a householder (a person who owns or rents the living quarters) and at least one person related to the householders by birth, marriage, or adoption" (p. 1).

One in five adults in the United States lacks the basic educational skills necessary to function well in society. Since the majority of households in the United States are composed of families, the probability of illiteracy becoming a family matter exists. Haste is necessary in order to break the vicious cycle of intergenerational illiteracy. An urgent need exists for

the identification of factors that are related to effective literacy programs for both adults and children.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this study was to determine whether family support should be a variable to consider when planning adult basic education programs. The following questions were examined:

(1) What were the demographic characteristics of Louisiana's ABE persisters and ABE non-persisters?

(2) What were the levels of family support of Louisiana's ABE persisters and ABE non-persisters?

(3) Did a relationship exist between family support level and persistence in the Louisiana ABE program?

(4) Did selected variables explain a significant proportion of the variance in the dependent variable, persistence? The selected variables included:

a. Family support sub-components. The literature (Beder & Valentine, 1990; Darkenwald & Gavin, 1987; Lewis, 1984a) gave the following as examples of types of family support sub-components: motivational, financial, and psychological.

b. The age of the students at the end of the 1990 academic year.

c. Socioeconomic status as measured by the student's total annual family income.

d. Race (Black, White or Other.)

e. Educational level as measured by the Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE). The TABE were given to each student in order to obtain their grade level when they first entered the ABE program. This score was used to define the educational level of the students at the time of entry into the program. "The TABE is essentially the same as the California Achievement Tests for grades 2-4 4-6, 6-9" (Mitchell, 1983, p. 427).

f. The most important reason given by the student for entering the ABE program. The results of the students' responses to the categories listed below were used in defining the most important reasons for entering the ABE program: 1) because I wanted to; 2) to get a job; 3) to get a better job; 4) to improve my reading; 5) to get my GED; 6) because my family forced me; 7) because the courts forced me; and 8) other, which was described.

g. Current employment status. Current employment status was defined as: 1) not currently working; 2) working part-time; or 3) working full-time.

(5) If one or more family support sub-components explained a significant proportion of the variance in persistence, what variables explained a significant proportion of the variance in the family support sub-components?

The researcher's definitions for terminology used in this study are given below.

Definition of Terms

(1) Adult basic education student (ABE student): All English speaking students who were enrolled in the adult basic education program.

(2) Persisters: All English speaking ABE students in Louisiana who were enrolled in an ABE program from January 1, 1990 through December 31, 1990, who either completed the program or were continuing their instruction on December 31, 1990.

(3) Non-persisters: All English speaking ABE students in Louisiana who were enrolled in an ABE program from January 1, 1990 through December 31, 1990 and who left before completing the program. If a student left the program but returned and met the criteria for persisters, he/she would be classified as a persister.

(4) Family: Members and extended family members of the ABE students' families including: mother, father, sister/brother, wife/husband, children, and grandparents.

(5) Family support: Members and extended family members involvement in some aspect of the ABE students' education.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Related Literature

Few previous studies that specifically examined family support and adult basic education students. The literature did provide ample evidence that involving parents in the education of their children produces positive benefits (Comer, 1986; Comer, 1988; Cone, Delawyer, & Wolfe, 1985; Dorchester School District 2, 1990; France & Meeks, 1987; Jackson & Cooper, 1989; Jongsma, 1990b; "Literacy begins," 1989; Schorr, 1990).

> Belief in the benefits of parent participation has been associated with legislative mandates requiring programs to include parental involvement components. For example, one of the six major principles of P.L. 94-142 deals with parent participation... parents must be included as members of the committee charged with developing their child's individualized education program, and they are encouraged to participate in public hearings, serve on advisory panels, and belong to advocacy groups.

Consistent with presumed positive benefits and legislative mandates is the requirement that

> programs seeking financial support from some funding agencies (e.g., Handicapped Childrens' Early Education Program, HCEEP, of the U.S. Department of Education) include parent involvement components (Cone, Delawyer, & Wolfe, 1985, pp. 417-418).

Because of the sparse research on the importance of family support for adult basic education students, the review of literature is centered in the following areas: Adult Basic Education in the United States, Adult Education in Louisiana, Previous Studies in Family Participation, Intergenerational Literacy, and Intergenerational Programs that include adult basic education.

Adult Basic Education in the United States

Literacy long has been a problem in American society. "The newspapers of the eighteenth century and other sources ... reveal that adults in colonial America sought to overcome the negative impacts of illiteracy through the evening schools" (Long, 1983a, p. 66).

Even today many adults, persons who have reached the age of 16, lack essential knowledge and skills in the fundamentals of reading, writing, and arithmetic. During World War I, this problem caused the federal government great concern since 25 percent of the men who were tested for the draft were "unable to read a newspaper

intelligently or to write an intelligent letter" (Cook, 1977, p. 11).

A 1978 study by Copperman, (cited in Long, 1983b) found that "20 percent of the adult population were found to be functionally incompetent. Many people could not perform simple tasks such as reading a want ad, addressing an envelope, or calculating the change due on a purchase. Thirty-nine million people, another 34 percent of the adult population, were found to be barely functional in these basic activities" (p. 140).

The first time the federal government allotted funds directly for literacy education, however, was when the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 became public law (Cook, 1977; Long, 1983b; Roberts, 1971). This legislation was designed to provide training for various adult basic education programs.

"The Adult Basic Education Program (ABE) resulted from Title IIB of the 1964 act (Adult Education Act) .... The main emphasis was placed on teaching, in an adult content, the basic communication as well as arithmetic skills" (Cook, 1977, p. 84).

Adult basic education as defined in the Code of Federal Regulations (1989) means instruction designed for an adult who:

(1) has minimal competence in reading, writing, and computation;

(2) is not sufficiently competent to meet the educational requirements of adult life in the United States; or (3) is not sufficiently competent to speak, read, or write the English language to allow employment commensurate with the adult's real ability. If grade level measures are used, adult basic education includes grades 0 through 8.9 (p. 14744).

The End-of-the-year Narrative Report for Adult Education: Bulletin 1849 (1989) explains that for states using grade level measures, adult basic education includes grades 0 through 4.9 (p. a-5). Louisiana uses grade levels 1.0 through 9.0 as a measure of its adult basic education students (Louisiana State Plan for Adult Education, 1989).

Although ABE is designed to help adults in gaining essential knowledge, problems exist in persistence nationwide (Darkenwald & Gavin, 1987). "The largest percentage of candidates (for GEDs) in both 1980 (40.8%) and 1989 (34.7%) cited personal reasons as the most important (for leaving school).... The high percentage of candidates who dropped out of school for personal reasons raises questions about students' adjustment to home and school" (Baldwin, 1991, p. 4).

Adult Education in Louisiana

Dr. E. D. Schumacher (1973), in his historical analysis of adult functional illiteracy in Louisiana, stated:

> The first public programs for adult education in Louisiana were developed at the local level and were intermittent in nature. The presence of many unassimilated foreign-born adults and the high illiteracy rate among citizens was (sic) revealed by the Army during World War I, prompted some local school authorities to offer Americanization and literacy courses before 1920. These programs were limited to the larger cities in the state, with New Orleans providing the most extensive adult schooling opportunities.... It was not until the administration of Governor Huey P. Long that active support was given to a campaign to eliminate adult illiteracy in Louisiana. A special session of the Legislature in 1928 passed a "malt tax" law and dedicated the receipts therefrom for use in programs designed to combat adult educational deficiencies (p. 42).

Today, all 64 parishes and 2 city school systems in Louisiana participate in the adult education program. A

total of 48 local school systems provide full-time adult education services, and 18 local school systems furnish part-time adult education classes.

The Louisiana State Plan for Adult Education (1989-93) states the purpose of its Adult Education Program as being two-fold:

(1) to provide for the initiation, maintenance, and expansion of instructional offering in basic academic and life-coping skills that will enable adults, 16 years of age and older who are not enrolled in the K-12 system and who have less than a high school education, to continue their education at least to the level of completion of secondary school, and

(2) to make available to educationally disadvantaged adults an opportunity to acquire basic literacy skills necessary to function in society, and become more employable, productive, and responsible citizens (p. 1).

Functional Illiteracy in Louisiana

The following passage, taken from a letter written to the Governor of Louisiana, by Patti C. Roemer, Chair of the Louisiana Literacy Task Force (1990), paints a dismal picture of Louisiana's illiterate adult population:

> The State of Louisiana is facing a bleak future. Our economy has suffered devastating blows in the recent past, and unemployment stands at record levels. We seek to attract new industry,

> new business for our state. But in the face of today's requirements for an increasingly skilled, literate, and technically able workforce, Louisiana's population is the least literate in the nation... alarming statistics indicate a significant and immediate need for action if Louisiana is to have any reasonable hope of a sustainable economic recovery into the next century (p. 1).

Functional illiteracy denotes one who has completed fewer than five years of school and lacks the ability or skills necessary to function competently in today's society (Statistics of Louisiana Adult Education Programs, 1989). According to United States Census data (cited in Statistics of Louisiana Adult Education Programs, 1989), Louisiana has ranked at the bottom of the 50 states since 1960, having the highest percentage of its population as being functionally illiterate. Fifty-three percent of Louisiana's adult population, 16 years and above, had less than a high school education. Also, 7.8% of the state's adult population 25 years of age and older had fewer than five years of schooling.

The purpose of Louisiana's ABE program is to provide instruction in basic academic and life-coping skills. In order for ABE programs to work, students must attend the

offerings, yet the dropout rate for this program in Louisiana is over 40 percent.

Previous Studies in Family Participation

Cone, Delawyer and Wolfe (1985) conducted a study to develop an objective measure of overall parent involvement in special education programs. The study produced a Parent/Family Involvement Index (PFII) that is a "reliably scored measure of parent participation in 12 different areas" (p. 424). "The PFII was designed to be completed by teachers, aides, or anyone else familiar with the extent of participation shown by the parents of a particular child" (p. 419). In addition to the results of PFII, other findings from the study were: (1) family income and parent education levels were positively correlated with involvement for both mothers and fathers and (2) mothers had higher levels of involvement than fathers in most areas.

Experimental research by Maclay and Askov (1988), "hypothesized that attendance patterns of the children might change as a result of the parents' involvement in school" (p. 24). After parental involvement, there was a statistically significant positive change in attendance of children in school. Four categories were used in Maclay and Askov's models which they referred to as: (1) single parent, (2) both parents, (3) single parent and child/children, and (4) both parents and child/children.

The latter category, using both parents and child/children, appeared "to send the strongest messages to the children. They (children) were able to see a tangible example of the value of education in both of their parents' lives" (p. 25).

In a 1984 study to identify priorities for increasing retention among American Indian students conducted by Falk and Aitken, 47% of the students completing or still attending college, and 33% who left college prior to completion, reported that parental support (or lack of) promoted retention. Thirty-four percent of the students still attending college reported that the support of friends promoted retention. Adequate financial support, parental support and support of friends were the three most frequently cited factors in promoting retention. "Results indicate that the support of their families is a key factor in helping students to remain in school and that there is a relationship between parent's educational background and attitudes on the one hand and years of school completed on the other. Colleges and universities must reach out to Indian families and communities, educate them on their importance to students, and encourage their support for friends and relatives who are currently students" (p. 29).

Garrison's (1985) research on dropouts found that the effects of the students' families ultimately helped to

determine persistence or dropout. "It seems evidently clear that the social life of many adult learners is filled with family and the concomitant socioeconomic responsibilities and commitments.... Because of the strong influence of socioeconomic factors external to the school setting, a more holistic view of environmental press is required for an understanding of dropout behavior in ABE" (pp. 26-27).

Lewis (1984a) also felt that "the education of the ABE student must be viewed as a holistic process" (p. 77). She noted that "A student's persistence in ABE programs can be influenced by institutional and personal support systems" (p. 73). Lewis' study identified friends and family members as the greatest advocates and children as dedicated supporters of their parents' undertaking. "Their encouragement spurred on the student and fostered increased communication" (pp. 75-76).

Lewis (1984b) viewed support "as a critical factor in the transition process of an adult who is using learning to enhance personal growth or to cope with change" (p. 163). She conducted a study involving 214 students who were currently enrolled in adult basic education classes throughout the state of Connecticut. The purpose of Lewis' study was to "assess the influence of supports and countersupports on undereducated adult learners" (p. 164). Lewis' findings suggested:

(1) Family members and friends are often the greatest supporters of students;

(2) The teacher is not as primary a force as friends and family members in motivating and encouraging students; and

(3) Children are significant supporters of their parents' efforts to return to school (p. 170).

Holistic analysis was the justification for Denton's (1989) conclusions:

> Disadvantaged youth are dropping out of school in record numbers; most of them are deficient in basic skills, marginally literate, and virtually unemployable. They are often products of a family cycle of illiteracy and dependency. If these youth are to be salvaged and their parents engaged in productive activity, the literacy levels and basic maintenance functions of the entire family must be enhanced (p. 9).

Summary of Previous Studies

Although the studies cited dealt with different populations, the results indicate that the need for family support appears to be the same. All reported family participation as a significant factor for the attendance and retention of students in educational environments.

Intergenerational Literacy

Wilson (1980) stated that "Adult students who withdraw from ABE classes may close doors of opportunity

and open doors of frustration. Both student and society stand to lose" (p. 173). Since the literature recognizes the vital role that families play in supporting the mission of the schools (Jackson & Cooper, 1989) the next wave of educational reform may be intergenerational literacy.

Jongsma (1990a) defines intergenerational literacy as "a term used to describe new instructional programs that hope to increase the reading skills, attitudes, and behaviors of adults and children and thus break the cycle of low levels of literacy.... Those intergenerational programs that are called family literacy programs denote the close relationship between the adult and child" (p. 426).

Intergenerational Programs

Intergenerational programming is defined in Ventura-Merkel, Liederman, & Ossofsky's (1989) article as "the purposeful bringing together of different generations in ongoing planned activities designed to achieve the development of new relationships as well as specified program goals.... Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of intergenerational programs have been initiated in the past decade. The settings for these programs are as varied as the populations they serve..." (p. 174). Most intergenerational programs in the literature deal with

family and community members learning how to help younger children.

Nickse (1989) compiled a list of intergenerational and family literacy programs. Selections include:

> Massachusetts - Family Literacy: Collaborations for Literacy (An Intergenerational Reading Project). Collaborations for Literacy, conducted by Boston University, was a community based reading project that trained college work-study students as literacy tutors to provide individualized reading instruction to low reading level adults, 0-4 grade level (p. 48).
>
> New Hampshire - Family School. The Dover Adult Learning Center (DALC) Family School program included work on basic skills and on parenting. It was designed to serve parents of young children who are themselves school dropouts, and the goal is to help parents prepare their children for school success while they improved their own basic skills (p. 49).
>
> Rhode Island - Tutoring For Parents (TFP)/APLUS. South Providence Tutorial (SPT) has provided after school tutorial services and family educational counseling services to the South Providence community for 22 years. It became

clear that most children did not succeed in school unless their parents were involved with, and informed about, the schools. TFP and APLUS helped to achieve a long awaited dream of the staff and board of SPT, a dream of providing a center for family and community literacy and learning, and a community base for communication with the schools (p. 51).

Texas - A Partnership Model for Family Literacy. This project developed and implemented a family literacy model program (including math) which focused on improving "literacy behaviors" in the home conducive to children's school achievement. Implementation of the adult portion of the model included parenting skills incorporating instruction on how undereducated parents can help their children learn as well as basic reading, writing, and math skills. The instruction was for educationally disadvantaged adults who functioned at equivalent grade levels 0-4 and adults who functioned at equivalent grade levels 5-8 (p. 52).

Washington - Project Even Start. Project Even Start was a pilot program in the state of Washington offering helpful instruction to parents in several school districts across the

> state. Project Even Start was designed to enhance the ability of illiterate and semi-literate parents to support their children in the learning process. Even Start programs provided instruction which integrated parenting skills with literacy and included basic education skills to parents who had less than an eighth grade level of ability in one or more of the basic skills (reading, language, arts, mathematics, and life skills) (p. 53).

Other intergenerational programs that dealt with adult basic literacy were described by Cross (1990) and funded by The Fund for the Improvement and Reform of Schools and Teaching (FIRST). "An important aspect of the legislation that created FIRST was its recognition of the irreplaceable role of parents in the education of their children. Congress cited strong evidence of the direct relationship between parent involvement and improved student achievement, attitudes, and performance in school" (p. 383). These programs included:

> Parents as Partners Intergenerational Literacy Project. This project represented a collaboration between the Chelsea Public Schools, Boston University, and several community organizations. Its objectives were to improve the literacy skills of adults and to

diminish the incidence of reading disability among school-age children (p. 384).

Improvement of Families in Improving the Educational Achievements of Their Children. This program offered joint learning experiences for targeted children and their parents. Parents received literacy and parenting education, using learning materials focusing on parenting and family issues. The program provided a family resource center and made an effort to coordinate other resources in the community (p. 384).

Partners in Learning. This program had three components: 1) the student/parent program involved students in grades K-8 and their parents in computer and workbook activities designed to improve reading, writing, math, and study skills; 2) the adult basic education program helped adults with basic reading and math skills and prepared them for the General Education Development (GED) exam; and 3) the English-as-a-second-language program worked with people of all ages who were beginning to learn English in a formal classroom format (p. 384).

Lansing Family/School Partnership. This project operated out of four Chapter One schools in the

> Lansing school district in conjunction with the local Literacy Volunteers of America program. Parents were encouraged to participate in adult education programs, to attend parenting classes for single parents, to use learning centers, to help with tutoring, and to conduct literacy activities (p. 387).
>
> Home/School Partnership. Components of this project included family workshops, a parent resource center with a lending library in each school, a booklet on early childhood for parents of preschoolers, a tutoring program for students, and an adult literacy program for families (p. 387).
>
> White Plains Family/School Partnership. Activities of this project included a monthly Saturday drop-in program, follow-up home visits for families of the students who are most at risk, English-as-a-second-language and GED classes for parents, training for grandmothers who are the primary caretakers of children, and a school district orientation series for parents (p. 387).

Hibpshman (1989) identified Parent and Child Education (PACE), a program in Kentucky. The PACE program was geared to providing supportive educational services to

the entire family, rather than just to the children or to the adults. Services were intended to address parents' attitudes and behaviors and their effect on children's educational performance. Program services included adult basic education and parenting skills training for parents (Hibpshman, 1989).

Louisiana recently has started Rosenwald Family Learning Center in Baton Rouge. Parents and children are learning together in this center. Parents studying at the Rosenwald Adult Learning Center were able to enroll their three and four year olds in an early learning center at the same site. This program began in April, 1991, with assistance from the East Baton Rouge School Board (YWCA, 1991). Dr. G. Varino (personal communication, July 23, 1991) stated that the program appeared to be working and the participants were enthusiastic about the outcomes. In addition to the upgrading of their literacy skills, parents also were learning parenting skills while the three and four year olds learn reading skills.

Summary of Intergenerational Programs

Programs such as the ones described do show an awareness of the importance of family support in the education of children and adults. "Regardless of the names of the programs, the intent of all of them is to treat literacy as a social activity that affects both young and older learners; it is a shared experience from

which both sets of learners may benefit" (Jongsma, 1990a, p. 426).

Since intergenerational programs are still in their infancy, no one can make any firm conclusions as to their effectiveness; however "preliminary findings do suggest reason for cautious optimism" ("Literacy begins," 1989, p. 4). Nickse (1989) suggests that "programs that either combine literacy services for both adults and children or focus on family literacy are thought to improve attitudes, behaviors, and reading skills for both" (p. 10).

Summary

Since the eighteenth century, people have been concerned with adult literacy education. Evening schools and adult education programs were initiated in order to provide instructions not only in basic literacy skills such as reading, writing, and arithmetic but also skills in parenting.

Although numerous programs for adult literacy education exist, problems in nonparticipation have hampered the success rate of these programs. Various studies have been conducted that examined factors to help explain participation and nonparticipation in adult education programs. Intergenerational programming looks at family support as a significant factor in the participation and retention of students in educational programs.

CHAPTER 3

Procedures

Population

The population for this study consisted of Adult Basic Education (ABE) students in Louisiana's 66 ABE centers. In 1989, these centers served 14,123 ABE students (Statistics of Louisiana Adult Education Programs, 1989).

History, maturation, selection, statistical regression and interaction effects were controlled by the random assignment of ABE centers and ABE participants. The sampling plan used in this study was a proportional random sample within a cluster sample by strata. Using Cochran's Sample Size Determination Formula, (Snedecor & Cochran, 1980), the minimum sample size needed was determined to be 197 individuals. The population addressed normally does not respond well to mailed questionnaires. Due to the nature of adult literacy classes and students, 400 questionnaires were mailed, with replacement, in order to secure a usable number of returned questionnaires.

The state was divided into three geographical areas because it was anticipated that the participants could vary by region of the state on the primary variables of

interest: persistence and family support. This theory is supported by the following headline from the Louisiana Almanac: "The old world culture still remains alive in many sections of Louisiana" (1988, p. 95). One-third of Louisiana's population is of French descent or Acadians who also are known as Cajuns and Creoles. The central and northern parts of Louisiana were settled by people from assorted parts of the United States, Area 1. Spanish-speaking people made their homes in the delta country in the southwest region, Area 2. Cajuns and Creoles mostly settled in southern Louisiana, Area 3. All of these people, together with the native Indians, gave Louisiana a background of mixed customs, languages, and ancestries (pp. 95-102). See Appendix G for the identification of parishes within each geographic area.

A total of 66 adult education centers are located in the state with 14,123 ABE students enrolled. The sampling plan is depicted in Table 1. Because of the large number of enrollees in Area 3, the highest number of students included in this study came from Area 3.

Table 1

Proportionate Sample Size Needed for Each Area

Areas	No. of centers	Number of students	Proportionate percentage	Sample size needed
1	29	3,704	26.2	105
2	15	3,708	26.3	105
3	22	6,711	47.5	190
	66	14,123	100.0	400

Each of the three geographic areas was subdivided into three ABE program sizes (small, medium and large) depending on student population in each ABE center. The 66 centers were arranged in descending order, by the size of the student population in that center. The lowest third, with a mean of 51 students, were classified as small; the second third, with a mean of 120 students, were classified as medium and the final third, with a mean of 471 students, were classified as large.

Table 2 illustrates the proportionate sample sizes needed for each center that was included in the sample. Area 1 included four small centers and two medium centers. There were three centers included in Area 2; one each of small, medium, and large. In Area 3 there were two medium centers and one large center.

Table 2

Proportionate Sample Size Needed by Centers

Center code	Number of students	Proportionate percentage	Sample size needed
Area 1			
1121	62	0.019	8
1125	87	0.027	11
1133	21	0.006	2
1158	78	0.024	10
1234	141	0.044	18
1235	154	0.048	19
Area 2			
2139	51	0.016	6
2212	100	0.031	12
2357	187	0.058	23
Area 3			
3226	157	0.049	20
3259	84	0.026	11
3317	2109	0.650	260
	3231	0.998	400

Seventeen centers were randomly selected to be included in the sample. Of the initial 17 centers, 6 agreed to be included in the study. A random selection of

11 more centers were chosen. Of the 11, 6 agreed to be included in the sample. Because of supervisors' previous obligations and concern for legal implications only 12 centers were included in the study.

Lists of students who were eligible to be included in the sample were obtained from the randomly selected centers. The twelve centers provided the following information concerning the students and the programs: name, address, city, state, zip, phone number, age, sex, persister/non-persister, and length of time in program.

The student names from each center were consecutively numbered starting with 0001. Each student was given a nine digit identifying number. The first two digits denoted the area and size, the next two digits denoted the center number, the next digit denoted whether the student was a persister or non-persister, and the last four digits were the consecutive numbers given each student. The students from the centers in the study were randomly selected. If any mailed questionnaire came back that was unusable, the name of another student from the same center as the person who returned the unusable questionnaire was selected as a replacement.

Instrumentation

Demographics section design

The literature review revealed that the following factors were related to persistence in adult basic education: academic level at time of enrollment, age, employment, gender, income, last grade attended, marital status, number of children, race, student goals, and mother and father's education (Beder, 1990; Beder & Valentine, 1990; Charleroy, 1989; Denton, 1989; Finn, Reiss, & Dulberg, 1980; Garrison, 1985; Heistand, 1971; Judge, 1990; Lewis, 1984a; Nickse, Speicher, & Buchek, 1988; Valentine & Darkenwald, 1990) as shown in Table 3. These variables were incorporated into the design of the demographics section of the instrument. See Appendix A.

Table 3

Previous Research Documenting Relationship Between Selected Demographic Factors and Persistence in Adult Basic Education

	Factors							
Source	a[1]	b[2]	c[3]	d[4]	e[5]	f[6]	g[7]	h[8]
Beder (1990)	X	X		X	X	X	X	
Beder & Valentine (1990)	X	X		X	X	X	X	
Charleroy (1989)	X		X		X			
Denton (1989)			X		X	X		
Finn, Reiss & Dulberg (1980)							X	
Garrison (1985)			X	X	X			
Heistand (1971)				X				
Judge (1990)							X	
Lewis (1984a)					X	X		
Lewis (1984b)	X	X		X	X			
Nickse, Speicher & Buchek (1988)	X				X	X	X	X

(table continues)

Source	Factors							
	a[1]	b[2]	c[3]	d[4]	e[5]	f[6]	g[7]	h[8]
Valentine & Darkenwald (1990)	X		X			X	X	X

a[1] = Age. b[2] = Whether or not students had children. c[3] = Goals. d[4] = Marital status. e[5] = Race. f[6] = Work status. g[7] = Sex. h[8] = Parent's education.

Family Support Section Design

The literature was searched for ways families could be involved in education programs. Cone, Delawyer, & Wolfe (1985) developed a 63-item objective measure of 12 types of parent participation in a child's special education program.

Table 4 identifies other studies (France & Meeks, 1987; "Literacy begins," 1989; Maclay & Askov, 1988; Nickse, 1989; Schorr, 1990) that identified similar items as having high relationships with younger students' achievement: (1) family involvement activities, (2) contact with the teacher, (3) transportation, (4) parental observations at school, (5) educational activities at home, (6) help with homework, (7) whether or not parents visited the school, and (8) books in the home. These items were

incorporated into the design of the family support section of the instrument, see Appendix A.

Table 4

Sources of Family Support Factors Related to Persistence in Adult Basic Education

	Factors							
Source	a[1]	b[2]	c[3]	d[4]	e[5]	f[6]	g[7]	h[8]
Cone, Delawyer, & Wolfe (1985)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
France & Meeks (1987)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Literacy Begins (1989)	X	X		X	X	X	X	
Maclay & Askov (1988)	X				X	X		X
Nickse (1989)	X	X			X		X	X
Schorr (1990)	X	X						

a[1] = family involvement activities. b[2] = contact with the teacher. c[3] = transportation. d[4] = parental observations at school. e[5] = educational activities at home. f[6] = help with homework. g[7] = whether or not parents visited the school. h[8] = books in the home.

In addition to the items identified from other studies, guidance personnel, university personnel, experts in the areas of adult education, administrators, and adult education persisters and non-persisters were interviewed concerning their perceptions of factors that were related to family support in ABE.

A list of 25 items that were related to family support in ABE was compiled from the literature, from the results of interviews with professionals in the area of adult education, and from the results of interviews with ABE students. The 25 items that were mentioned most often were written in a Likert-type scale ranging from one (never supported the student in educational matters) to four (always supported the student). Students were asked to circle the response that described how their family helped them in regard to each item. Each item was scored as follows: (A)lways = 4 (M)ost of the time = 3 (S)ometimes = 2 (N)ever = 1

An overall family support score was calculated by adding the value of all responses. The family support sub-component scores were calculated by adding the value of all responses to the items in that sub-component.

Validation

The instrument was administered to 24 randomly selected adult basic education students who were not included in the sample. Internal consistency of the

family support construct and its sub-components was assessed using the Kuder-Richardson 21 procedure. "Since the Kuder-Richardson procedures stress the equivalence of all the items in a test, they are especially appropriate when the intention of the test is to measure a single trait" (Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh, 1985, p. 334). The overall internal consistency on the field test items was r = .95. According to Hinkle, Wiersma, & Jurs (1988), this was considered to be a very high positive reliability coefficient. Modifications in the instrument were not found to be necessary.

Data Collection Procedures

Initial information about the students was obtained with a mailed questionnaire (See Appendix B: Letter to Adult Education Supervisors) to each of the 12 parish adult education supervisors who agreed to be included in the study.

The initial information collected from the centers about the students included: name, age, race, gender, level of education when starting the program, total hours in the program, address, telephone number, and whether they were persisters or non-persisters. Additional student data were collected by two mailed questionnaires to the individual students and an intensive telephone follow-up of all the non-respondents. See Appendix D for the telephone script used in the telephone follow-up. All

the students who did not respond to the second mailed questionnaire were called (Appendix B: Second Mailing, All Nonrespondents).

The survey developed for use in this study (Appendix A) was sent by mail along with a cover letter (Appendix B: First Mailing, Persisters and First Mailing, Non-Persisters), and a self-addressed stamped envelope to the random sample of ABE students. Table 5 shows the initial individual survey mailings to the sample. It also includes the number of surveys in the first mailing, second mailing, and subsequent telephone follow-up. Thirty-one responses (18.1%) were received in the mail as a result of the telephone follow-up. Of the 171 total responses, 8 were not included in the analysis of the data because the responding students' grade levels exceeded the 9.0 grade level cutoff used for Louisiana's ABE program.

The mailed surveys that were returned unusable in the first and second mailings were due to bad addresses or because ABE students did not want to be a part of the survey. These were replaced by randomly selecting students from the same centers. A response rate of 86.8% (171) and a usable response rate of 82.7% (163) were obtained after two mailings and an intensive telephone follow-up.

Table 5

Rate of Respondents' Return of Survey

Data collection	Number of surveys mail.[a]	unus.[b]	usab.[c]	Percent of mailed	Percent of total answered
1st Mailing	400	105	94	23.5	55.0
2nd Mailing	306	19	46	15.0	26.9
Telephone	260	172	31	26.8	18.1
			171		100.0

mail.[a] = number of surveys mailed and number of telephone calls. unus.[b] = unusable. usab.[c] = usable.

The telephone follow-up served two purposes: (1) to determine if the opinions of the nonrespondents were similar to those of the respondents and (2) to increase the number of responses. Nine variables were chosen, a priori, to be used to compare the responses between the mailed and telephone surveys. The χ^2 test of homogeneity was used to test for significant differences. In order to make the assumption that the opinions of the telephone respondents were similar to those of the mailed respondents, no significant differences must be found in at least six of the nine variables chosen.

A significant difference was found in only one of the nine variables as shown in Table 6. Persisters (87 or 64.9%) were more likely to answer the mailed surveys, while non-persisters (19 or 65.5%) were more likely to answer the telephone surveys as illustrated in Table 7. See Appendix E, Tables E3 - Table E7 for other tables that compare people in the mailed and telephone surveys.

Table 6

χ^2 and t Statistics for Mailed and Telephone Surveys

Variable	Statistic	df	Significance
	χ^2		
Status[a]	9.032	1	0.003*
Employ[b]	5.097	2	0.078
Sex	0.458	1	0.498
Help[c]	5.612	7	0.586
Race	0.074	1	0.785
Marital	1.402	4	0.844
	t		
Age	0.750	45.33	0.455
Score[d]	-0.450	33.69	0.657
Educ[e]	0.420	31.81	0.679

*p < .05. Status[a] = Persisters or Non-persisters. Employ[b] = Employment status. Help[c] = Person most helpful to respondents. Score[d] = Calculated family score. Educ[e] = Educational level.

Table 7

Mailed vs Telephone Survey by Status

	Mail		Telephone		Total	
Status	n	%	n	%	n	%
Persisters	87	64.9	10	34.5	97	59.5
Non-persisters	47	35.1	19	65.5	66	40.5
Total	134	100.0	29	100.0	163	100.0

In order to insure maximum response and because of the anticipated high percentage of students not having telephones, disconnected numbers, and wrong numbers, a telephone follow-up of all nonrespondents was made.

Almost 56% (144) of the nonrespondents could not be reached by telephone. The reasons included: no telephones, wrong numbers, disconnected telephones, non-published numbers, moved, death, or in jail. Slightly over 18% (47) of the nonrespondents either indicated that they would mail in the survey or requested another one to be sent as shown in Table 8. At the time of the survey, 6.5% (17) of the nonrespondents were serving time in jail as indicated by their families in the telephone follow-up.

Table 8

Responses as a Result of Telephone Follow-up of Non-Respondents

Comments	n	Percent of total
Disconnected	43	16.5
Will mail[a]	33	12.7
Wrong number	31	12.0
No telephone	27	10.4
Mailed survey[b]	25	9.6
Not interested	24	9.2
In jail	17	6.5
Send another	14	5.4
No answer/not In	14	5.4
Non-published number	13	5.0
Moved	12	4.6
Answered phone survey	6	2.3
Participant died	1	0.4
	260	100.0

Will mail[a] = Non-respondents indicated that they would return the surveys by mail. Mailed survey[b] = As a result of the telephone follow-up, these non-respondents mailed in their surveys.

Table 9 indicates the number of surveys mailed to each center, the number of unusable responses replaced because of bad addresses, the number of responses received from each center, the percentage of the total responses from the individual centers, and the percentage of total responses received.

Table 10 shows the returns by center areas and center sizes. Areas 1 and 2 had a lower response rate than area 3. The larger centers had higher responses rates than the small and medium sized centers.

Table 9

Responses by Location

Center	Initial surveys mailed	No. repl[a]	No. of resp[b]	Percentage of total resp[c]	Percentage of total mailed[d]
1121	8	2	5	3.1	62.5
1125	11	2	2	1.2	18.2
1133	2	0	0	0.0	0.0
1158	10	0	3	1.8	30.0
1234	18	2	5	3.1	27.8
1235	19	6	1	0.6	5.3
2212	12	0	4	2.5	33.3
2139	6	0	0	0.0	0.0
2357	24	6	7	4.3	29.2
3317	260	106	121	74.2	46.5
3226	20	0	5	3.1	30.0
3259	10	0	10	6.1	100.0
	400	124	163	100.0	

Note: repl[a] = number of surveys replaced. resp[b] = number of surveys received. resp[c] = percentage of total responses received. mailed[d] = percentage of total responses from the individual centers.

Table 10

Responses by Geographic Areas and Sizes of Centers

	Number sent	Number of responses	Percent of total sent	Percent of total
Areas				
1	68	16	23.5	9.8
2	41	11	26.8	6.8
3	291	136	46.7	83.4
		163		100.0
Sizes				
Small	36	10	27.8	6.1
Medium	80	25	31.3	15.4
Large	284	128	45.1	78.5
		163		100.0

Data Analysis

Research question one was: What are the demographic characteristics of Louisiana's ABE persisters and ABE non-persisters? Research question two was: What are the levels of family support of Louisiana's ABE persisters and ABE non-persisters? Descriptive statistics such as count data, mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the data relative to research questions one and two.

Research question three was: Does a relationship exist between family support level and persistence in the Louisiana ABE program? Since the family support variables are continuous, interval data and the persistence variable is a nominal variable, a point biserial correlation coefficient was used to analyze the data for research question three.

Research question four was: Do selected variables (family support sub-components, age, gender, socioeconomic status, race, educational background, the most important reason for entering the ABE program, and current employment status) explain a significant proportion of the variance in the dependent variable, persistence? Since the variable of interest is a nominal variable, discriminant analysis were used to analyze the data relative to research question four.

Research question five was: If one or more family support sub-components explains a significant proportion of the variance in persistence, what variables explain a significant proportion of the variance in the family support sub-components? Since the dependent variables are continuous, interval variables, multiple stepwise regression analyses were used to analyze the data relative to research question five.

The alpha level for all statistical analyses was set a priori at .05.

Summary

A response rate of 86.8% (171) and a usable response rate of 82.7% (163) were obtained after two mailings and an intensive telephone follow-up. Eight of the responses were not used in the data analysis since the responding students' educational levels were above the cutoff criterion of educational levels ≤ 9.0 grade.

CHAPTER 4

Findings

The purpose of this chapter is to present the data and explain the findings which are organized according to the research questions asked in this study.

Research Questions

Research Question One: Demographics

Research question one was: What are the demographic characteristics of Louisiana's ABE persisters and ABE non-persisters? Descriptive statistics such as count data, means and standard deviations were used to analyze the data relative to research question one. Gender, race, age, and educational background information were provided by the ABE centers.

The majority of the 163 responding students (97 or 59.5%) were classified as persisters. Females were more numerous than males (92 or 56.4%). Table 11 shows the gender and race of the respondents.

The sample was divided into three groups on the basis of race--White, Black, and other races. Blacks made up 59.1% (94) of the responding students as shown in Table 11. The students listed in the category "Other" included two Hispanics, one Vietnamese, and one Cambodian. Race

was not provided by the centers for four of the persisters.

Table 11

Gender and Race of Respondents

	Persisters		Non-persisters		Total	
Variable	n	%	n	%	n	%
Gender						
Female	56	57.7	36	54.5	92	56.4
Male	41	42.3	30	45.5	71	43.6
	97	100.0	66	100.0	163	100.0
Race						
Black	54	58.1	40	60.6	94	59.1
White	36	38.7	25	37.9	61	38.4
Other	3	3.2	1	1.5	4	2.5
	93	100.0	66	100.0	159	100.0

Students ranged in age from 16 to 70 years (Table 12). The most frequently occurring age was 18 years old (21 or 13.2%). Although over 43% (69) of the responding students were in the age group 16 through 22, over 23% (38) of the students were 37 years old or older.

Actual ages were provided by the ABE center directors. Ages of four people were not supplied. The

age ranges that are reflected in Table 12 were constructed for use in the table.

Table 12

Age Groups of Respondents (N = 159)

Age group	Persisters		Non-persisters		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
16 - 22	40	42.6	29	44.6	69	43.4
23 - 29	22	23.4	13	20.0	36	22.6
30 - 36	12	12.8	5	7.7	16	10.1
37 - 43	9	9.6	9	13.8	18	11.3
44 - 50	3	3.2	3	4.6	6	3.8
51 - 57	5	5.3	5	7.7	10	6.2
58 - 64	2	2.1	0	0.0	2	1.3
65+	1	1.0	1	1.6	2	1.3
	94	100.0	65	100.0	159	100.0

Note. Missing = 4.

Table 13 gives the average age of the responding students by persistence and race. The age classification was based on the age of the students at the end of 1990. The average age of all respondents was 28.5. There was no significant difference at the $p < .05$ level between the average age of persisters and of non-persisters (t_{157} =

.13, p = .900). The average age of Blacks was 30.1 and for Others was 29.5, higher than for White respondents whose age averaged just under 26 years.

Table 13

Ages of Respondents by Persistence and by Race

Description of students	$\bar{x}$	sd	n	df	t
Persistence				157	0.13
Persisters	28.4	12.3	93		
Non-persisters	28.6	12.5	66		
Race					
Black	30.1	13.2	94		
White	25.9	10.7	61		
Other	29.5	7.9	4		

Note. N = 159. $\bar{X}$ = 28.5. SD = 12.31

Table 14 illustrates the average educational levels of the responding students. The actual educational levels were provided by the ABE center directors and data were missing for 18 students. The average educational level of persisters was 6.7 years of school and for non-persisters it was 6.6 (Table 14). Although White students (7.2) had higher educational levels than Black students (6.2), there were no significant difference between their educational

levels. There was no significant difference at the $p < .05$ level between the average educational level of persisters and of non-persisters ($t_{143} = -.25$, $p = .807$). The range of educational levels was 1.0 to 9.0.

Table 14

Educational Levels of Respondents by Persistence and by Race ($N = 145$)

Description of students	$\bar{X}$	sd	n
Persistence			
Persisters	6.7	1.7	86
Non-persisters	6.6	1.7	59
Race			
Black students	6.2	1.8	86
White students	7.2	1.4	55
Other	7.4	.9	4

Note. $\bar{X} = 6.6$. SD = 1.7. Missing = 18.

Five choices were offered in the marital status category: single (never been married), married, separated, divorced, and widowed. Table 15 indicates that there was very little difference among the frequencies in the marital status of persisters and non-persisters. The majority (92 or 57.5%) of the responding persisters and

non-persisters indicated that they were single (never been married). Twice the percentage of persisters (11 or 11.6%) were divorced as compared with the non-persisters (4 or 6.2%).

Table 15

Marital Status

Marital status	Persisters		Non-persisters		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Single	52	54.7	40	61.5	92	57.5
Married	29	30.5	18	27.7	47	29.4
Divorced	11	11.6	4	6.2	15	9.4
Separated	3	3.2	1	1.5	4	2.5
Widowed	0	0.0	2	3.1	2	1.2
	95	100.0	65	100.0	160	100.0

Note. Missing = 3.

The Code of Federal Regulations (1990) was the basis for determining the family income level ranges in Table 16. Family income includes the money income of all the persons living in the household of the participating students in this study. Income included monies from salaries, wages, and welfare.

Family income was derived from a single question asked of the students on the survey: "What is your total family income each month?" The total family income given was multiplied by 12 to get the annual family income.

The most frequently occurring (34 or 36.2%) family income levels were in the $0 - $6,280 category. The average annual family income level for responding persisters was $13,673.20 compared with $11,443.06 for responding non-persisters. The overall average annual family income was $12,866.55 (SD = 1,055.36). Seventeen percent (16) of the students indicated that their annual family income levels were in excess of $21,000.

Current Population Reports (1988) listed the national median family income as $32,190. This amount was almost three times as much as the amount of the average annual family income ($12,867) of the responding students in this study. The Census Bureau, in determining the poverty status of persons, stated that the average poverty threshold for a family of four was $12,092 in 1988. Therefore approximately 67% of the respondents were living in poverty.

When students reported their sources of income, 20% of the 94 responses indicated welfare or AFDC (Aid for Families of Dependent Children) as the source of income. Table 16 summarizes the students' family income levels.

Table 16

Family Income (N = 94)

Annual income	Persisters (n = 60)		Non-pers[a] (n = 34)		Total (N = 94)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
$0 - $6,280	22	36.7	12	35.3	34	36.2
$6,281 - $8,420	8	13.3	3	8.8	11	11.7
$8,421 - $10,560	3	5.0	2	5.9	5	5.3
$10,561 - $12,701	8	13.3	5	14.7	13	13.8
$12,701 - $14,840	3	5.0	4	11.8	7	7.5
$14,841 - $16,980	1	1.7	0	0.0	1	1.1
$16,981 - $19,120	3	5.0	2	5.9	5	5.3
$19,121 - $21,000	2	3.3	0	0.0	2	2.1
$21,001 - $30,000	5	8.4	4	11.8	9	9.6
$30,001 - $40,000	2	3.3	1	2.9	3	3.2
$40,001 - $50,000	1	1.7	1	2.9	2	2.1
over $50,000	2	3.3	0	0.0	2	2.1

Note. $\bar{X}$ = $13,673.20. SD = 1,055.36. Missing = 69.

Non-pers[a] = Non-persisters.

Students were given three choices in supplying their employment status: (1) not working now (those students were not working when the survey was taken); (2) working

part-time (those students that worked 34 hours or less per week); and (3) working full-time (those students who worked more than 35 hours per week). Table 17 reflects the current employment status of the responding students. Over 51% (83) indicated that they were not working at the time of the survey.

Table 17

Current Employment Status (N = 161)

Employ[a] status	Persisters		Non-persisters		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Not working	50	52.1	33	50.8	83	51.5
Full-time	30	31.3	26	40.0	56	34.8
Part-time	16	16.6	6	9.2	22	13.7
	96	100.0	65	100.0	161	100.0

Note. Missing = 2. Employ[a] = Employment.

The occupational classification of the students was derived from the question: "If you are working, what kind of work do you do?" Seventy-eight of the responding students indicated that they were employed at least part-time (Table 18). Three of the students indicated that they were employed in two types of work. Of the responding students that were working, 51% (41) indicated

that they were employed either as clerical workers or as food service workers. The occupations of persisters and non-persisters were very similar as indicated in Table 18.

Table 18

Occupational Classifications of Respondents (N = 81)

	Persisters		Non-persisters		Total	
Occupation	n	%	n	%	n	%
Clerical	11	22.4	10	31.2	21	25.9
Food Service	12	24.4	8	25.0	20	24.7
Health Service	7	14.3	3	9.4	10	12.3
Labor	7	14.3	3	9.4	10	12.3
Cleaning Service	4	8.2	4	12.5	8	10.0
Mechanics & Repair	4	8.2	3	9.4	7	8.6
Const[a]	4	8.2	1	3.1	5	6.2
	49	100.0	32	100.0	81	100.0

Note. Const[a] = Construction.

Students were instructed to select one person, from the choices given in Table 19, who helped them the most in

their educational endeavors. Overall, the three main categories that both groups indicated as their major supporters were: mother (58 or 35.6%), spouse (33 or 20.2%), and other (23 or 14.1%). It is interesting to note that seven persisters (4.3%) listed father as their major supporter and no non-persisters listed father as their major supporter.

Of the 23 responses under the category "Other," 8 (39.1%) listed friends, 4 (17.4%) listed teachers, and 4 (17.4%) listed no one as their major supporters. Other people listed under the category "Other" included: pastor, niece, brother-in-law, nephew, and manager.

Table 19

Major Supporters (N = 157)

Family member	Persisters		Non-persisters		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Mother	35	37.6	22	32.8	58	35.6
Spouse	18	19.4	15	22.4	33	20.2
Other	14	15.1	9	13.4	23	14.1
Boy/girl*	7	7.5	10	14.9	18	11.0
Children	5	5.4	4	6.0	10	6.1
Sibling	5	5.4	2	3.0	7	4.3
Grandparents	2	2.1	5	7.5	7	4.3
Father	7	7.5	0	0.0	7	4.3
	93	100.0	67	100.0	160	99.9

Note. Missing = 6. Boy/girl* = Boy/girlfriend.

Students were asked to indicate all the reasons why they had entered the ABE program. Of the 304 responses given, most of the students indicated "Get my GED" (106 or 34.9%) as the main reason for entering the program (Table 20). More than three times as many persisters (25) as non-persisters (8) listed "Get a job" as the main reason for entering the program.

Of the 16 responses given under the category "Other," 9 (56%) indicated "to better myself" and 4 (25%) wrote "to enroll in college" as reasons for entering the ABE program. Other responses given under "Other" included: physical disability, failing high school, and to help my younger children. There were very few differences in the responses of persisters as compared to non-persisters as shown in Table 20.

Table 20

Reasons for Entering Program (N = 304)

	Persisters (n = 194)		Non-pers.[a] (n = 110)		Total (N = 304)	
Reasons	n	%	n	%	n	%
Get my GED	62	32.0	44	40.0	106	34.9
I wanted to	42	21.6	19	17.3	61	20.1
Get a better job	34	17.5	21	19.1	55	18.1
Get a job	25	12.9	8	7.3	33	10.9
Improve reading	19	9.8	12	10.9	31	10.2
Other	10	5.2	6	5.4	16	5.2
Family forced me	2	1.0	0	0.0	2	0.6
Courts forced me	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0

Note. [a]Non-pers. = Non-persisters.

Students were asked to indicate all the family members living in their households. Table 21 shows that there appear to be very similar percentages of the family members living in the same residence of persisters and of non-persisters. The majority (179 or 74.9%) of both groups lived with either mother, spouse, children, and/or father. Of the 19 responses listed in the category "other," 8 (42.1%) listed other family members, 6 (31.6%) listed friend, and 5 (26.3%) listed boyfriend as living in the same residence.

Table 21

Family Members in the Same Residence (N = 239)

Family member	Persisters (n = 144)		Non-persisters (n = 95)		Total (N = 239)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Mother	35	24.3	24	25.2	59	24.7
Spouse	28	19.4	20	21.1	48	20.1
Children	27	18.8	17	17.9	44	18.4
Father	18	12.5	10	10.5	28	11.7
Sibling	11	7.6	9	9.5	20	8.4
Other	13	9.0	6	6.3	19	7.9
No one	9	6.3	7	7.4	16	6.7
Grandparents	3	2.1	2	2.1	5	2.1

Sixteen responding students who were classified as persisters in 1990 had dropped out of the ABE program when the data were collected. Because these students were classified as persisters at the end of 1990, they also were classified as persisters in this study.

The reasons given for not staying in the program by all responding students are listed in Table 22. Financial reasons accounted for almost half (46.4%); personal and

transportation were the next two most pressing reasons given for non-participation.

Table 22

Reasons Given by Respondents for Non-participation in ABE Programs (N = 56)

	Persisters (n = 16)		Non-pers.* (n = 40)		Total (N = 56)	
Reasons	n	%	n	%	n	%
Financial	8	50.0	18	45.0	26	46.4
Personal	3	18.8	7	17.5	10	17.9
Transportation	2	12.5	5	12.5	7	12.5
Children	2	12.5	3	7.5	5	8.9
Discouraged	0	0.0	2	5.0	2	3.6
Other Program	0	0.0	2	5.0	2	3.6
Too noisy	1	6.3	0	0.0	1	1.8
In Jail	0	0.0	1	2.5	1	1.8
Did not Want to	0	0.0	1	2.5	1	1.8
Center Closed	0	0.0	1	2.5	1	1.8

Note. Non-pers.* = Non-persisters. Missing = 107.

In summary regarding research question one, the majority (59.1%) of the students and the majority of the non-persisters (60.6%) in the study were black. More

females (54.5%) were classified as non-persisters than were males.

Over 65% of the students were between 16 and 29 years old. The average age of the students was 28 years. Over one-third of the students were 30 years old and older. Blacks were, on an average, a little over four years older than whites. The majority (57.3%) of the students were single.

Although half of the students' annual family incomes fell below $10,561, the average annual family income was $12,867. Over 46% of the students who had dropped out of the ABE program did so for financial reasons.

Research Question Two: Levels of Family Support

Research question two was: What were the levels of family support of Louisiana's ABE persisters and ABE non-persisters? Descriptive statistics such as count data, means and standard deviations were used to analyze the data relative to research question two. Table 23 gives the means for each of the 25 items included in the family support sub-components by persistence. The three variables: "wants me to do my best" (3.6), "tells me school is important" (3.5), and "listens to me when I talk about school" (3.1) had the highest overall means for persisters and non-persisters.

Table 23

Means of Family Support Sub-components by Persistence

	Family support sub-components	Total $\bar{x}$	Total sd	Pers[a]	NonPer[b]
1.	Helps me with my school work	2.25	1.06	2.33	2.11
2.	Allows time for me to study	2.99	1.05	3.10	2.84
3.	Tells me school is important	3.50	0.91	3.61	3.34
4.	Praises me for being in school	3.08	1.05	3.18	2.94
5.	Asks me how I am doing in school	2.75	1.07	3.25	2.79
6.	Makes a place for me to study at home	2.75	1.23	2.81	2.66
7.	Helps to buy my books	2.43	1.25	2.54	2.27
8.	Helps keep the house quiet	2.62	1.14	2.70	2.53
9.	Drives me to school	2.02	1.17	2.10	1.90
10.	Helps do some of my chores	2.21	1.07	2.20	2.22
11.	Talks with my teachers	1.90	1.02	1.93	1.85
12.	Makes sure I get to school on time	2.81	1.18	2.88	2.72

(table continues)

	Family support sub-components	Total		Pers[a]	NonPer[b]
		$\bar{x}$	sd		
13.	Asks me what goes on in class	2.60	1.13	2.61	2.58
14.	Finds extra things for me to read	2.19	1.08	2.26	2.08
15.	Listens to me when I talk about school	3.10	1.08	3.23	2.90
16.	Makes sure I get enough rest	2.78	1.11	2.84	2.69
17.	Wants me to do my best	3.60	0.80	3.64	3.55
18.	Have meals ready for me	2.60	1.15	2.71	2.43
19.	Asks me what I am studying	2.70	1.06	2.77	2.60
20.	Tell others they are proud of me	2.95	1.09	3.01	2.85
21.	Helps me pay my bills	2.53	1.23	2.63	2.39
22.	Gives me money when I need it	2.72	1.13	2.88	2.48
23.	Helps me buy my clothes	2.41	1.22	2.54	2.20
24.	Buys me books to read	1.95	1.11	2.01	1.87
25.	Allows my friends to come over to study with me	2.42	1.15	2.25	2.68

Note: Pers[a] = Persisters. NonPer[b] = Non-persisters.

Research Question Three: Relationship Between Family Support Level and Persistence

Research question three was: Does a relationship exist between family support level and persistence in the Louisiana ABE program? Since the family support variables are continuous, interval data, and the persistence variable is a nominal variable, a point biserial correlation coefficient was used to analyze the data for research question three. The strength of the correlations was interpreted using Hinkle, Wiersma and Jurs' (1988) scale:

Size of Correlation	Interpretation
±.90 to ±1.00	Very high positive (negative) correlation
±.70 to ± .90	High positive (negative) correlation
±.50 to ± .70	Moderate positive (negative) correlation
±.30 to ± .50	Low positive (negative) correlation
±.00 to ± .30	Little if any correlation (p. 118).

The alpha level for all statistical analyses was set a priori at .05.

The overall average family support score, on a scale of one to four, for all responding students was 2.63. This score indicated that the responding students' families generally supported them "most of the time" in their educational efforts (Table 24). Although persisters, with an average family support score of 2.71,

had a higher family support score than non-persisters (2.54), there was no significant difference at the $p \leq .05$ level in their scores ($R = .0850$, $N = 156$, $P = .146$).

White males had the highest average family support score (2.83) while black males had the lowest average family support score (2.52). Data for race "Other," which had only four responses, were not included in the analysis. Black females indicated higher scores than white females (2.54) whose scores were similar to those of Black males. Other pertinent data are in Table 24.

Table 24

Respondents' Perceived Family Support Scores by Race and Gender ($N = 149$)

Statement	n	x	sd
Overall score	149	2.63	.79
Persisters	93	2.71	.71
Non-persisters	63	2.54	.89
Black	93	2.60	.79
Male	41	2.52	.89
Female	52	2.67	.71
White	56	2.67	.80
Male	26	2.83	.84
Female	30	2.54	.76

Research Question Four: Explanation of the Variance in Persistence

Research question four was: Do selected variables (family support sub-components, age, gender, socioeconomic status, race, educational background, the most important reason for entering the ABE program, and current employment status) explain a significant proportion of the variance in the dependent variable, persistence? Discriminant analysis was used to analyze the data relative to research question four.

Exploratory factor analysis, with the loading criterion set at .40, was used to reduce the 25 items in the family support section of the survey to an uncomplicated structure. Three factors resulted that could be interpreted as being the family support sub-components. The first factor was comprised of items that were clearly more psychological in nature than the other two factors, hence it was denoted as "psychological." Most of the items comprising this factor related to motivating the student: tells others they are proud of me, tells me school is important, listens to me when I talk about school, wants me to do my best, and praises me for being in school. Factor I explained 47.2% of the total variance.

The second factor was labelled "family responsibilities." Most of the items comprising this

factor related to aspects of family life: helps to do some of my chores, have meals ready for me, makes sure I get to school on time, drives me to school, and allows my friends to come over to study with me. Factor II explained 8.1% of the total variance.

The third factor was labelled "financial" for obvious reasons. The items comprising this factor related to economics: helps me pay my bills, helps me buy my clothes, and gives me money when I need it. Factor III explained 4.9% of the variance.

Taken together, these three rotated factors accounted for 60.2% of the variance in the original items as shown in Table 25. The rotated factor matrix is shown in Table 26.

Table 25

Family Support Sub-components

Factors	Percent of variance	Sub-components
Psychological	47.2	Asks me how I am doing in school
		Tells others they are proud of me
		Tells me school is important
		Listens to me when I talk about school
		Wants me to do my best
		Praises me for being in school
		Makes a place for me to study at home
		Asks me what I am studying
		Helps keep the house quiet
		Makes sure I get enough rest
		Allows time for me to study

(table continues)

Factors	Percent of variance	Sub-components
Family responsibilities	8.1	Finds extra things for me to read
		Asks me what goes on in class
		Buys me books to read
		Talks with my teachers
		Have meals ready for me
		Makes sure I get to school on time
		Drives me to school
		Allows my friends to study with me
		Helps to do some of my chores
Financial	4.9	Helps me pay my bills
		Helps me buy my clothes
		Gives me money when I need it
		Helps to buy my books
		Helps me with my school work

Table 26

Rotated Factor Matrix

Variables	Factors 1	2	3
Asks me how I am doing in school	.77993		
Tells me school is important	.75352		
Wants me to do my best	.74622		
Praises me for being in school	.72662		
Tell others they are proud of me	.72286		
Listens to me when I talk about school	.69824		
Makes a place for me to study at home	.67723		
Makes sure I get enough rest	.61578		
Asks me what I am studying	.61095		
Helps keep the house quiet	.59669		
Allows time for me to study	.52652		

(table continues)

Variables	Factors		
	1	2	3
Finds extra things for me to read		.70946	
Asks me what goes on in class		.64847	
Helps me with my school work		.60575	
Buys me books to read		.62573	
Talks with my teachers		.64547	
Have meals ready for me		.49582	
Drives me to school		.48492	
Makes sure I get to school on time		.46878	
Allows my friends to come over to study with me		.41915	
Helps me pay my bills			.83110
Gives me money when I need it			.82426
Helps me buy my clothes			.82162
Helps to buy my books			.64580
Helps do some of my chores			.49117

The variable, socioeconomic status (N = 94; 69 cases were missing), was eliminated from the analysis because of the large amount of missing data. Results obtained from such a sample might differ from those that would be obtained if all socioeconomic status data were included. The eight items included in the variable "most important reason for entering the ABE program" also were eliminated from the discriminant analysis computations. The respondents were given the option to select all that applied in this category. The chi square statistic was used to analyze the items included in this variable. The variables (family support sub-components, age, gender, race, educational background, and current employment status) were included in the discriminant analysis computations.

Table 27 presents an overview of the descriptive statistics for the discriminating variables used in the analysis. Overall, persisters had higher means than non-persisters, particularly in regard to the psychological dimension, but there were no significant differences in their means.

Table 27

Means, Standard Deviations, and F-ratios Between Groups for Discriminating Variables

Discriminating variables	Group: Persisters (n=81)	Group: Non-pers[a] (n=56)	F	p
Psychological	3.09	2.86	2.34	0.13
Financial	2.54	2.33	1.48	0.23
Family resp[b]	2.34	2.24	0.46	0.50
Educational level	6.66	6.61	0.36	0.85
Age	27.36	27.43	-0.01	0.97
Gender				0.97
Race				
Black				0.81
White				0.84
Employment				
Full-time			0.41	0.53
Part-time			1.55	0.22
None			2.09	0.15

Note. Non-pers[a] = Non-persisters. Family resp[b] = Family responsibilities.

Table 28 shows that a high correlation coefficient (0.79) existed between the family support sub-components family responsibilities and psychological. According to Hinkle, Wiersma, and Jurs' (1988) scale, this was considered a high positive correlation.

Table 28

Pooled Within-Groups Correlation Matrix: Discriminating Variables (N = 137)

							Race		Employment[a]		
	Psyc[b]	Fina[c]	Fami[d]	Educ[e]	Age	Sex	B[f]	W[g]	Full[h]	Prt[i]	NoW[j]
Psyc[b]	1.00										
Fina[c]	0.64	1.00									
Fami[d]	0.79	0.74	1.00								
Educ[e]	0.17	0.20	0.18	1.00							
Age	-0.01	-0.05	-0.11	-0.05	1.00						
Sex	0.07	0.07	-0.06	0.10	0.02	1.00					
Race											
Black	-0.04	-0.08	-0.00	-0.33	0.21	0.04	1.00				
White	0.03	0.03	0.00	0.31	-0.20	-0.08	-0.96	1.00			

(table continues)

							Race		Employment[a]		
	Psyc[b]	Fina[c]	Fami[d]	Educ[e]	Age	Sex	B[f]	W[g]	Full[h]	Prt[i]	NoW[j]
Employ											
Full[h]	-0.06	0.08	0.03	-0.02	-0.09	0.16	0.16	-0.17	1.00		
Prt[i]	0.05	-0.00	-0.00	-0.02	-0.10	0.00	-0.03	0.02	-0.46	1.00	
NoW[j]	0.04	-0.10	-0.02	0.03	0.16	-0.19	-0.13	0.15	-0.71	-0.27	1.00

Employment[a] = Employment Status. Psyc[b] = Psychological. Fina[c] = Financial. Fami[d] = Family Responsibilities. Educ[e] = Educational levels. B[f] = Black. W[g] = White. Full[h] = Full-time. Prt[i] = Part-time. NoW[j] = Not working now.

Table 29 indicates that the family support sub-component psychological and the variable "not currently working" had high correlations with the discriminant function. Group means were not different based on the lambda shown in Table 29. "A lambda of 1 occurs when all observed group means are equal" (Norusis, 1988, p. 79).

Table 29

Summary Data for Stepwise Discriminant Analysis (N = 137)

	Discriminant function 1				
Variables	b	s	B_o	Group	Centroids
Psyc[a]	0.74	0.71	0.86	Persisters	0.152
NoWk[b]	-0.70	-0.67	-1.52	Non-Pers[c]	-0.220
B_o			-2.11		

Eigenvalue	R_c	Wilks' Lambda	p
0.0341	0.182	0.967	0.106

b = standardized discriminant function coefficient.

s = within-groups structure coefficient.

B_o = unstandardized discriminant function coefficient.

R_c = canonical correlation coefficient.

Psyc[a] = Psychological. NoWk[b] = Not working now. Non-pers[c] = Non-persisters.

Table 30 shows the numbers of correct and incorrect classifications. Only the cases with complete information for all predictor variables were included in the classification results table. Slightly over half (57.05%, 89 out of 156) of the cases were classified correctly. "A discriminant function with an observed misclassification rate of 50% is performing no better than chance" (Norusis, 1988, p. 88). Therefore, a 57% correct prediction between two groups is a small improvement and indicates that the discriminating variables used were relatively poor predictors for persistence.

Table 30

Classification of Cases by Discriminant Analysis Procedure

	Predicted groups				
Actual group	Persisters		Non-persisters		
	n	%	n	%	Total N
Persisters	51	54.8	42	45.2	93
Non-pers[a]	25	39.7	38	60.3	63
Total	76	48.7	80	51.3	156

Note. Percent of cases correctly classified = 57.05%. Non-pers[a] = Non-persisters.

The χ^2 test of homogeneity was used to compare the variables in the most important reasons for entering the ABE program with the variable persistence. The results of the χ^2 statistic, shown in Table 31, indicated that a significant relationship (p = .03) was found between persisters and non-persisters on the variable "Get a job." Persisters were more likely to give this reason for entering the ABE program than were non-persisters.

Table 31

χ^2 Statistic for the Selected Variables

Variables	χ^2	df	Significance
Get a job	4.72098	1	0.02980*
I wanted to	3.52454	1	0.06047
Get better job	0.16707	1	0.68273
Get GED	0.16707	1	0.68273
Improve reading	0.04419	1	0.83350
Employment	2.80770	2	0.24565

* $p < .05$.

In summary, although no statistically significant relationships between the family support score of persisters and non-persisters were found at the $p \leq .05$ level in any of the variables used in the discriminant analysis, there was some indication that a difference

existed between the family support of persisters and non-persisters in the discriminating variable "psychological" (p = .13).

A significant relationship (p = .03) between persisters and non-persisters was found on the variable "Get a job." There was some indication that a difference existed on the variable "I wanted to" (p = .06) for the reason students entered the program.

Research Question Five: Family Support Sub-Components

Research question five was: If one or more family support sub-components explains a significant proportion of the variance in persistence, what variables explain a significant proportion of the variance in the family support sub-components? Since no significant relationships were found in the family support sub-components between persisters and non-persisters, research question five was not addressed.

CHAPTER 5

Summary, Results, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to determine if family support should be a variable to consider when planning adult basic education programs. The following research questions were examined:

1. What are the demographic characteristics of Louisiana's Adult Basic Education (ABE) persisters and ABE non-persisters?

2. What are the levels of family support of Louisiana's ABE persisters and ABE non-persisters?

3. Does a relationship exist between family support level and persistence in the Louisiana ABE program?

4. Do selected variables (family support sub-components, age, gender, socioeconomic status, race, educational background, the most important reason for entering the ABE program, and current employment status) explain a significant proportion of the variance in the dependent variable, persistence?

5. If one or more family support sub-components explains a significant proportion of the variance in persistence, what variables explain a significant

proportion of the variance in the family support sub-components?

Procedures

The target population for this study was all the students enrolled in Louisiana's Adult Basic Education (ABE) centers from January 1, 1990 through December 31, 1990. An accessible population of 3,231, which consisted of students enrolled in 12 of Louisiana's ABE centers, was the source of the sample in the study.

Data Collection

The instrument used was developed by the investigator by using existing literature and personal interviews with professionals in adult education, university professionals, and ABE students. The instrument was designed to measure family support and to collect demographic data. Content validity of the instrument was evaluated by university faculty members and adult education personnel. The instrument was field tested with 24 randomly selected ABE students in four centers who were not included in the sample. To determine the reliability of the instrument, a reliability coefficient was computed for the variable, family support (.96), using the data collected from the responding sample.

Three methods were used to collect data for this study: (1) use of data files from the 12 adult education centers; (2) a mailed survey questionnaire; and (3) an

intensive telephone follow-up. The minimum sample size needed was determined to be 197. Surveys were mailed, with replacement, to a random sample of 400 ABE students. One hundred seventy-one (86.8%) surveys were received after two mailings and an intensive telephone follow-up. Eight of the responses were not used in the data analysis since the responding students' educational levels were above the cutoff criterion of educational levels ≤ 9.0 grade. This resulted in a usable sample of 163 students for a response rate of 82.7%. Four additional surveys were received after the data were analyzed and were not included in the study.

Results

When students were asked to indicate the reasons they entered the ABE program, 106 of the 163 students indicated "Get my GED" as their main reason. Of the 304 total reasons given, financial responsibilities motivated 29% of the students to enter the program, and 20.1% of the students entered the program because they "wanted to."

Demographics

The majority (57.8%) of the students and the majority (60.6%) of the non-persisters in the study were black. More females (54.5%) were classified as non-persisters than were males.

Over 65% of the students were between 16 and 29 years old. The average age of the students was 28 years. Over

one-third of the students were 30 years old and older. Blacks were, on an average, over four years older than Whites. The majority (57.3%) of the students were single.

Although half of the students' annual family incomes fell below $10,561, the average annual family income was $12,867. The differences in the mean and median of the family income levels could be accounted for by the fact that 22% of the students indicated that their family income levels were in excess of $21,000. The majority of the student' family incomes closely aligned with Baldwin's (1991) statistics concerning GED candidates: "nearly 32% reported annual household incomes of less than $10,000," (p. 5). Almost one-fifth of the students received their incomes from public assistance.

The average family income of the participants in this study ($12,867) was only slightly above the national average poverty threshold ($12,092) used in 1988 by the Census Bureau. The majority (67%) of the responding students' average family incomes fell below the national average poverty threshold level. These economic data probably accounted for the fact that 46.4% of the responding students gave financial reasons for dropping out of the ABE program. Economic reasons also were given by 29% of the students for entering the program (Get a better job, 18.1%; Get a job, 10.9%).

Over 46% of the students who dropped out of the ABE program did so in order to work. Although some students were able to find jobs, their choices often were limited to lower-level positions at lower wages. Half of the employed students were either clerical workers (25.9%) or food service workers (24.7%).

Family Support

The mean summed score for family support on a scale of one to four was 2.63, which indicated that students' felt their families generally supported them in their educational efforts. While the family support mean score of persisters (2.71) was higher than the mean score of non-persisters (2.54), there was no significant statistical difference in their mean family support scores ($p = .146$).

Although no statistically significant differences between the family support score of persisters and non-persisters were found at the $p = .05$ level in any of the variables used in the discriminant analysis, the greatest difference was found in the discriminating variable "psychological" ($p = .13$).

No significant relationships were found among gender, race, employment, and all of the reasons given for entering the ABE program except one. A significant relationship ($p = .03$) between persisters and non-persisters was found on the variable "Get a job." There

was some indication that a positive relationship existed on the variable "I wanted to" (p = .06) for the reason students entered the program.

The students indicated that their mothers (35.6%) were their major supporters, followed by spouses (20.2%). Only 6.7% (16) of the students lived alone. Therefore 93.3% of the students in this Louisiana study lived in some type of family household. This tended to exceed the statistics given by the U. S. Department of Commerce (1984) that 73% of the households in the United States were composed of families, (p. 1).

Conclusions

The majority of Louisiana's ABE students were single Black females living with their mothers. Most of the students who had dropped out of the ABE programs did so for financial reasons, and a large percentage of the students were unemployed. The average age of the students was 28 years and their average family income was $12,867.

Both persisters and non-persisters in Louisiana's Adult Basic Education programs felt they had families that generally supported them in their educational efforts. No statistical differences existed between persisters and non-persisters in the areas of family support, race, sex, age, educational level, or income.

Evidence indicated that persisters may have had different reasons for entering the ABE program than the

reasons given by non-persisters. Persisters were more likely to have entered the ABE program in order to prepare for a job than were non-persisters. This indicated that more emphasis could be placed on teaching vocational skills to ABE students. Basic academic skills could be taught by application in job related situations.

Forty-six percent of the students may have chosen to work rather than complete their education. The low average family income levels of the students in this study show that they may have had to work in order to survive. This lack of education is detrimental both to society and to the individual. "The future occupational structure is projected to provide jobs for workers at all educational levels, but persons with the most education and training will enjoy the best job opportunities" (Silvestri & Lukasiewicz, 1989, p. 42). Baldwin (1991) states: "if young people are choosing to work rather than complete their schooling, the price may be high for both individuals and society--individuals lose opportunities for additional training, advanced education, better jobs, and higher wages, while society loses the increased productivity of better educated, more highly skilled workers" (p. 3).

The purpose of this study was to determine whether family support should be a variable to consider when planning adult basic education programs. No statistically

significant relationships were found between family support and the persistence of ABE students. But slightly over 20 percent of the ABE students that entered the ABE program did so simply because they wanted to. This fact indicated that motivating factors exist, especially where motivating the student to enter educational programs was concerned.

Recommendations

Five recommendations were made based on the results, conclusions, ideas, and suggestions arising out of this study.

Recommendation One: Replication of Study

Since there is no consistent body of research available that directly addresses the role of family support and ABE students, there is a need for a replication of this study and other research involving ABE students and their families. Based on the findings, suggestions, and ideas arising out of this study, the following additional variables should be considered: (a) Number of people in the household, (b) Number of children under 18 in the household, (c) Ages of the children in the household, (d) Educational level of the most supportive person, and (e) Sources of income. These types of data are collected at the state and national levels. These added variables would allow a comparison between the data collected at the state and national levels. This

comparison could be used to test any similarities or differences that may be unique to ABE students in Louisiana.

In addition to the added variables, the following changes should be considered: (1) Include a proportionate sample from each of Louisiana's ABE centers. Because of its large student population one center in this study accounted for over 74% of the responses, therefore; some caution should be used when generalizing the results of the study. (2) Call students before sending the survey. Although students were not willing to answer questions over the telephone, 22% of them mailed the surveys after the telephone call. This procedure could help to eliminate sending mail to many inaccurate addresses. (3) Personal interviews with the ABE students. Since 20.1% of the students entered the ABE program because "they wanted to," a personal interview could give the researcher the opportunity to ask pertinent questions concerning the students' reasons for entering the ABE program.

Recommendation Two: Career Counseling

The large number (69 or 43.4%) of young students, ages 16 to 22, in ABE programs indicates that serious problems in persistence exist in the regular K-12 programs. Support services should be provided that would help to remove barriers to participation in programs and to help guide the students in career planning. Since it

is doubtful that many students of this age group will return to a regular K-12 program, academic and career counselors in adult education programs should actively target recruitment activities toward ABE students. Students at this age have many years of potentially productive work ahead of them. Funds spent in career counseling could be an economically sound investment.

Recommendation Three: Outreach Programs

Based on the comments and questions written on the surveys and received over the telephone, students were not aware that there were options available to them other than classroom instruction. Alternative instruction available included: GED/ABE on TV (KET, 1991) and individualized reading instruction by trained paraprofessionals that could be given in their homes. More effective outreach programs that inform educationally disadvantaged students of the availability of adult education services and the benefits of the ABE program must be conducted.

Recommendation Four: Further Research

The only statistically significant difference found in this study between persisters and non-persisters was on the variable "Getting a job" as the reason the students entered the ABE program. This indicated that the students who persisted realized that education was vital in order to take advantage of occupational opportunities. Further

research should be conducted that links persistence with job related variables for ABE students.

Recommendation Five: Role of Vocational Education

The results of the study show that almost one-third of Louisiana's ABE students enter the ABE programs either to get a job or to get a better job and almost 50% leave the programs for financial reasons. These statistics indicate that job related skills are vital.

Curtis F. Hoglan, in a speech on August 8, 1991, at the summer annual meeting of the Louisiana Association of Business Educators stated that "the number one problem in Louisiana today is an undereducated and undertrained workforce.... Persons such as these are adding five million to the illiteracy rate per year." Mr. Hoglan also indicated that vocational education must assume a vital role in helping to eliminate statistics such as these.

Vocational education may be the perfect vehicle for helping to retain students in adult educational programs. Vocational education program planners should form partnerships with centers for adult education. It is critical that in addition to basic skills, job related skills such as resume writing, communication skills, human relations and interpersonal skills, and interviewing techniques be stressed. Vocational education could provide a valuable link with business and industry in helping to find solutions for the high rate of persistence

and non-participation in ABE programs. Programs could be designed where working adults could study while on the job. This would allow them the opportunity to earn a living as well as furthering their education.

Summary

Although this study did not find evidence that family support was crucial to persistence of ABE students, indications were that focusing on education to enhance career opportunities could be a determining factor in keeping adults in an educational setting.

REFERENCES

Ary, D., Jacobs, L. C., & Razavieh, A. (1985). Introduction to research in education (3rd ed.). Fort Worth: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, Inc.

Baldwin, J. (1990). GED profiles: Adults in transition. GED candidates: A decade of change. GED Testing Service of the American Council on Education. No 1, Washington, DC: American Council on Education.

Baldwin, J. (1991). GED profiles: Adults in transition. GED Testing Service of the American Council on Education. No 3, Washington, DC: American Council on Education.

Balmuth, M. (1986). Essential characteristics of effective adult literacy programs: A review and analysis of the research. Washington, DC: Office of Educational Research and Improvement. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 273 823).

Beder, H. W. (1990). Reasons for nonparticipation in adult basic education. Adult Education Quarterly, 40(4), 207-218.

Beder, H. W., & Valentine, T. (1990). Motivational profiles of adult basic education students. Adult Education Quarterly, 40(2), 78-94.

Booth, W. C. (1988). Cultural literacy and liberal learning. Change, 20(4), 11-21.

Bryk, A. S., & Thum, Y. M. (1989). The effects of high school organization on dropping out: An exploratory investigation. American Educational Research Journal, 26(3), 353-383.

Charleroy, B. D. S. (1989). Characteristics of the GED preparation program dropout and persister. Dissertation Abstracts International, 50(10), 3131A.

Clark, R. M. (1987). Family organization, communication styles, and children's competence development. Equity and Choice, 4(1), 27-34.

Code of Federal Regulations. (1989, Nov. 1). United States Government: Education 34, Part 400 to End, U. S. Government Printing Office, volume 54, number 69, p. 14744.

Code of Federal Regulations. (1990, Mar. 1). Poverty income guidelines. United States Government: U. S. Government Printing Office, p. 5665.

Comer, J. P. (1984). Home-school relationships as they affect the academic success of children. Education and Urban Society, 16(3), 323-337.

Comer, J. P. (1986). Parent participation in the schools. Phi Delta Kappan, 62(6), 442-446.

Comer, J. P. (1988). Is 'parenting' essential to good teaching? NEA Today, 6(6), 34-40.

Cone, J. D., Delawyer, D. D., & Wolfe, V. V. (1985). Assessing parent participation: The parent/family involvement index. Exceptional Children, 51(5), 417-424.

Cook, W. D. (1977). Adult literacy education in the United States. Newark: International Reading Association.

Cross, C. T. (1990). The FIRST grants: Federal leadership to advance school and family partnerships. Phi Delta Kappan, 72(5), 383-388.

Current Population Reports: Consumer Income. (1988). Money income and poverty status in the United States: 1988. Bureau of the Census: U.S. Department of Commerce.

Darkenwald, G. G., & Gavin, W. J. (1987). Dropout as a function of discrepancies between expectations and actual experiences of the classroom social environment. Adult Education Quarterly, 37(3), 152-163.

Denton, W. H. (1989). The next educational reform: Family support systems. Community Education Journal, 16(2), 6-10.

Dorchester School District 2. (1990). Parents as instructional support, 1990. Adult education chapter I staff development. Summerville, SC. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 315 578).

Dulaney, K. A. (1987): A comprehensive approach for parent and community involvement. Illinois Schools Journal, 67(1), 42-48.

End-of-the-year Narrative Report for Adult Education: Bulletin 1849. (1989). Baton Rouge: Louisiana Department of Education.

Falk, D. R., & Aitken, L. P. (1984). Promoting retention among American Indian college students. Journal of American Indian Education, 23(2), 1984, 24-31.

Finn, J. D. (1989). Withdrawing from school. Review of Educational Research, 59(2), 117-142.

Finn, J. D., Reiss, J., & Dulberg, R. (1980). Sex differences in educational attainment: The process. Comparative Educational Review, 24(2), 23-52.

France, M. G., & Meeks, J. W. (1987). Parents who can't read: What the schools can do. Journal of Reading, 32(3), 222-227.

Garrison, D. R. (1985). Predicting dropout in adult basic education using interaction effects among school and nonschool variables. Adult Education Quarterly, 36(1), 25-38.

Gordon, E. E., Ponticell, J., & Morgan, R. R. (1989). Back to basics. Training & Development Journal, 43(8), 73-76.

Heistand, D. H. (1971). Changing careers after thirty-five. New York: Columbia University Press.

Hibpshman, T. L. (1989). An explanatory model for family literacy programs. Little Rock: Mid-South Educational Research Association. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 313 531).

Hinkle, D. E., Wiersma, W., & Jurs, S. G. (1988). Applied statistics for the behavioral sciences (2nd ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.

Jackson, B. L., & Cooper, B. S. (1989). Parent choice and empowerment: New roles for parents. Urban Education, 24(3), 263-286.

Jongsma, K. S. (1990a). Intergenerational literacy (questions and answers). The Reading Teacher, 43(6), 426-427.

Jongsma, K. S. (1990b). Intergenerational literacy (questions and answers). The Reading Teacher, 43(7), 522-523.

Judge, K. M. (1990). Dropout prediction in adult basic education: Critical relationships among multiple psychosocial variables. Dissertation Abstracts International, 51(8), 2603A.

KET, The Kentucky Network. (1991). Lexington, KY: Enterprise Division.

Knowles, M. S. (1980). The modern practice of adult education: From pedagogy to andragogy. New York: Cambridge, The Adult Education Co.

Lewis, L. H. (1984a). Support systems: An essential ingredient for high-risk students. Adult Literacy and Basic Education, 8(2), 73-79.

Lewis, L. H. (1984b). An issue of support. International Journal of Lifelong Education, 4(2), 163-176.

Literacy begins at home. (1989, April). Business Council for Effective Literacy for the Business Community, p. 3-7.

Long, H. P. (1983a). Adult basic education in colonial America. Adult Literacy and Basic Education, 7(2), 55-68.

Long, H. P. (1983b). Adult and continuing education: Responding to change. New York: Teachers College Press.

Louisiana Almanac. (1988). Gretna: Pelican Publishing Co.

Louisiana Literacy Task Force. (1990). A literature Louisiana: The key to economic recovery and future growth. Baton Rouge: Bourque Printing, Inc.

Louisiana State Plan for Adult Education (1989-93): Bulletin 1858. (1989, June 2). Baton Rouge: Louisiana Department of Education.

Maclay, C. M., & Askov, E. N. (1988). Computers and adult beginning readers: An intergenerational study. Lifelong Learning: An Omnibus of Practice and Research, 11(8), 23-25, 28.

McAdoo, H. P. (1989). Cultural issues affecting labor force participants, background paper no. 25. Washington, DC: Office of Educational Research and Improvement. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 317 692).

McDermott, R. P. (1984). When school goes home: Some problems in the organization of homework. Teachers College Record, 85(3), 391-409.

McIlvoy, N. D. (1989). Literacy is hot. Vocational Education Journal, 64(3), 20-23.

Mitchell, J. V. (1983). Tests in print III: An index to tests, test reviews, and literature on specific tests. Lincoln, NB: The Buros Institute of Mental Measurements.

Nickse, R. S. (1989). The noises of literacy: An overview of intergenerational and family literacy programs. Washington, DC: Office of Educational Research and Improvement. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 308 415).

Nickse, R. S., Speicher, A. M., & Buchek, P. C. (1988). An intergenerational adult literacy project: A family intervention/prevention model. Journal of Reading, 31(7), 634-642.

Norusis, M. J. (1988). SPSS-X advanced statistics guide (2nd ed.). Chicago, IL: SPSS Inc.

Pellegrino, J. P. (1988). Literacy is vital to survival in the technical classroom and workplace. NASSP Bulletin, 72(509), 88-94.

Quigley, B. A. (1990). Hidden logic: Reproduction and resistance in adult literacy and adult basic education. Adult Education Quarterly, 40(2), 103-115.

Rich, D. (1987). Schools and families: Issues and actions. Washington, DC: Office of Educational Research and Improvement. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 312 061).

Roberts, R. W. (1971). Vocational practical arts education: History, development and principle (3rd ed.). New York: Harper & Row Publishers.

Schorr, L. B. (1990). Improving programs for disadvantaged families: From moving models to moving mountains. Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Human Services, 500-503.

Schumacher, E. D. (1973). The struggle against functional illiteracy in Louisiana. Baton Rouge, LA: Maplewood Books.

Silvestri, G., & Lukasiewicz, J. (1989, November). Projections of occupational employment, 1988-2000. Monthly Labor Review, 42-65.

Smith, K. M. (1984). The home as learning center: The family as educator. Contemporary Education, 55(2), 81-84.

Snedecor, G. W., & Cochran, W. G. (1980). Statistical methods (7th ed.). Ames, IA: The Iowa State University Press.

Statistics of Louisiana Adult Education Programs: Bulletin 1797. (1989). Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana Department of Education.

U. S. Department of Commerce. (1984). Household and family characteristics: March 1983. Bureau of the Census: Series P-20, N. 388. U. S. Government Printing Office.

Valentine, T., & Darkenwald, G. G. (1990). Deterrents to participation in adult education: Profiles of potential learners. Adult Educational Quarterly, 41(1), 29-42.

Ventura-Merkel, C., Liederman, D. S., & Ossofsky, J. (1989). Exemplary intergenerational programs. Journal of Children in Contemporary Society, 20(3/4), 173-180.

Wilson, R. C. (1980). Personological variables related to GED retention and withdrawal. Adult Education, 30(3), 173-185.

YWCA: Focus. (1991, July). YWCA. p. 1.

APPENDIX A: LETTERS SENT

Letter to Adult Education Supervisors

March 21, 1991

1~ 2~
3~
4~
5~, LA 6~

Dear 2~:

Your center was selected to be the pilot test site in a statewide study to help determine if family support has any effects on the continued enrollment of Adult Basic Education (ABE) students. Even though a program may be excellent, the chances for the students' success are zero if they do not attend, or if they start and then drop out.

The literature shows that ABE students are four times as likely to drop out as other adult education participants. Many reasons are given for nonparticipation and dropping out of ABE programs. With the support of Glenn Gossett, State Director of the Bureau of Adult and Community Education, and the LSU School of Vocational Education we will try to find out if family support is important in keeping adults in schools.

The success of the study depends on you. We will be contacting the students directly, so your help is needed in supplying information concerning all of the ABE students you enrolled from January 1990 through December 1990, including those who dropped out.

1. Name
2. Address
3. Telephone number (including area code)
4. Sex
5. Age or birthdate
6. Race
7. Level of education when starting the program
8. Total hours in the program
9. Whether the student has dropped out, graduated or is still enrolled

You may supply the data on your own forms, on computer disks (please identify the format and the software used), or on the forms enclosed.

To stay on a timely schedule, we ask that you get the information back to us by April 30, 1991. If you have any questions, please call me at work at (504) 388-2099 or at home at (504) 927-5470. Thank you for taking the time to help with this most important issue.

Sincerely,

Geraldine H. Holmes
Graduate Assistant

Barbara A. Holt, Ph.D.
Associate Professor

First Mailing (Persisters)

May 1, 1991

6~ 7~
8~
9~, LA 10~

Dear 6~:

You are smart for going back to school. Many students would like to further their education but various reasons have kept them from doing so.

We are doing a study to find ways to help students return to school and stay there once they have enrolled. Your help is needed very much. People like you know it is important to return to school.

Please fill out the enclosed survey and return it to us in the envelope by May 20, 1991. If you have any questions, please call us at (504) 388-2099, Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

We need your help, but if you do not want to be a part of this survey, please check the box below. Then return this letter in the self-addressed stamped envelope. Whether you want to participate or not, your name will not be released.

Sincerely,

Geraldine H. Holmes
Graduate Assistant

Barbara A. Holt, Ph.D.
Associate Professor

☐ I DO NOT WANT BE A PART OF THIS SURVEY.

First Mailing (Non-Persisters)

May 1, 1991

6^ 7^
8^
9^, LA 10^

Dear 6^:

We know that going back to school was hard for you. You are to be praised for trying to go back. There must have been important reasons that caused you to not go on in the adult education program.

We are doing a study to find ways to help students return to school and stay there once they have enrolled. Your help is needed very much. People like you know the problems in going back to school.

Please fill out the enclosed survey and return it to us in the envelope by May 1, 1991. If you have any questions, please call us at (504) 388-2099, Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

We need your help, but if you do not want to be a part of this survey, please check the box below. Then return this letter in the self-addressed stamped envelope. Whether you want to participate or not, your name will not be released.

Sincerely,

Geraldine H. Holmes
Graduate Assistant

Barbara A. Holt, Ph.D.
Associate Professor

☐ I DO NOT WANT BE A PART OF THIS SURVEY.

Second Mailing (All Nonrespondents)

June 15, 1991

6~ 7~
8~
9~, LA 10~

Dear 6~:

On June 1, 1991 we sent you a letter asking for your help. Please take a few minutes to read this letter and send us a response back whether you answer the enclosed survey or not. If you choose not to answer, only the responses of others can be used to determine the results of the survey.

This study is being conducted to find ways to help students return to school and stay there once they have enrolled. Your help is needed very much. People like you know the problems in going back to school.

Please fill out the enclosed survey and return it to us in the envelope by July 3, 1991. If you have any questions, please call us at (504) 388-2099, Monday through Thursday between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

Sincerely,

Geraldine H. Holmes
Graduate Assistant

Barbara A. Holt, Ph.D.
Associate Professor

☐ I DO NOT WANT BE A PART OF THIS SURVEY.

APPENDIX B: ABE SURVEY

ABE SURVEY

FAMILY HELP

Listed below are ways families help adult students. Circle the response which describes how your family helps with each item.

My family...	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Never
Helps me with my school work.	A	M	S	N
Allows time for me to study	A	M	S	N
Tells me school is important.	A	M	S	N
Praises me for being in school.	A	M	S	N
Asks me how I am doing in school.	A	M	S	N
Makes a place for me to study at home	A	M	S	N
Helps to buy my books	A	M	S	N
Helps keep the house quiet.	A	M	S	N
Drives me to school	A	M	S	N
Helps do some of my chores.	A	M	S	N
Talks with my teachers.	A	M	S	N
Makes sure I get to school on time.	A	M	S	N
Asks me what goes on in class	A	M	S	N
Finds extra things for me to read	A	M	S	N
Listens to me when I talk about school.	A	M	S	N
Makes sure I get enough rest.	A	M	S	N
Wants me to do my best.	A	M	S	N
Have meals ready for me	A	M	S	N
Asks me what I am studying.	A	M	S	N
Tell others they are proud of me.	A	M	S	N
Helps me pay my bills	A	M	S	N
Gives me money when I need it	A	M	S	N
Helps me buy my clothes	A	M	S	N
Buys me books to read	A	M	S	N
Allows my friends to come over to study with me	A	M	S	N

(PLEASE GO ON TO THE OTHER SIDE)

GENERAL INFORMATION 1-2-3-4-5-

1. The person who helps me most is... (Circle only one number)

   1. mother
   2. father
   3. brother/sister
   4. husband/wife
   5. boyfriend/girlfriend
   6. children
   7. grandparents
   8. other _____

2. I entered the program... (Circle all that apply)

   1. because I wanted to.
   2. to get a job.
   3. to get a better job.
   4. to improve my reading.
   5. to get my GED.
   6. because my family forced me.
   7. because the courts forced me.
   8. Other _____

3. I live with... (Circle all that apply)

   1. no one
   2. mother
   3. father
   4. brother/sister
   5. husband/wife
   7. children
   8. grandparents
   9. other _____

4. I am...

   1. Male
   2. Female

5. My marital status is... (Circle only one number)

   1. Single (never been married)
   2. Married
   3. Separated
   4. Divorced
   5. Widowed

6. I am... (Circle only one number)

   1. not working now.
   2. working part-time.
   3. working full-time.

7. If you are working, what kind of work do you do? _____

8. What is your total family income each month? _____

NOTE:
We know that many people do not like to tell how much money they are making. This information would really help us to help future students. If you do not want to give this information, just leave the line blank. Please answer the other questions.

APPENDIX C:
ENROLLMENT IN ADULT BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAMS BY PARISH

Parishes	Total ABE Students Enrolled	Parishes	Total ABE Students Enrolled
Acadia	184	Morehouse	141*
Allen	62	Natchitoches	154*
Ascension	109	Orleans	979
Assumption	65	Ouachita	382
Avoyelles	27	Plaquemines	95
Beauregard	295	Pointe Coupee	51*
Bienville	70	Rapides	345
Bossier	492	Red River	114
Caddo	329	Richland	70
Calcasieu	353	Sabine	123
Caldwell	29	St. Bernard	104
Cameron	100*	St. Charles	173
Catahoula	49	St. Helena	125
Claiborne	63	St. James	41
Concordia	55	St. John	74
DeSoto	142	St. Landry	417
E. Baton Rouge	2109*	St. Martin	134
East Carroll	140	St. Mary	329
East Feliciana	90	St. Tammany	758
Evangeline	201	Tangipahoa	615
Franklin	62*	Tensas	162
Grant	77	Terrebonne	225
Iberia	346	Union	80
Iberville	179	Vermilion	187*
Jackson	87*	Vernon	78*
Jefferson	157*	Washington	84*
Jefferson Davis	172	Webster	58
Lafayette	850	W. Baton Rouge	52
Lafourche	285	West Carroll	33
LaSalle	26	West Feliciana	17
Lincoln	143	Winn	94
Livingston	326	City of Monroe	85
Madison	21*	City of Bogalusa	49

NOTE: The asterisks indicate the centers that were included in the sample.

APPENDIX D: TELEPHONE SCRIPT

Hello. My name is Geraldine Holmes from the School of Vocational Education at LSU in Baton Rouge.

May I speak to (First name) (Last name)

Hello (First name) (Last name)

I'm calling about the adult education surveys that we sent to you. Have you received them?

A. If no . . . Do you mind taking a few minutes to complete the survey over the telephone or would you rather I send you another one?

If the person wants another survey sent, verify the address and send another, otherwise; continue with the script.

B. If yes . . . The reason for my call is that your response is very important to me and to the results of the study. Do you mind taking a few minutes to complete the survey over the telephone?

If yes . . . Ask all questions on the survey.

Thank you very much. I really appreciate you taking the time to answer the survey.

Thank the person and end the conversation.

If no . . . Would you rather I call you back at another time?

If yes. . When would be a good time to call back? Call back.

If no . . Do you mind taking a few minutes to fill out the survey and return it to me in the self-addressed stamped envelope?

Regardless of the answer, thank the person and end the conversation.

APPENDIX E: GRAPHS AND TABLES

Figure 1 Educational Levels by Race and Sex (N = 141)

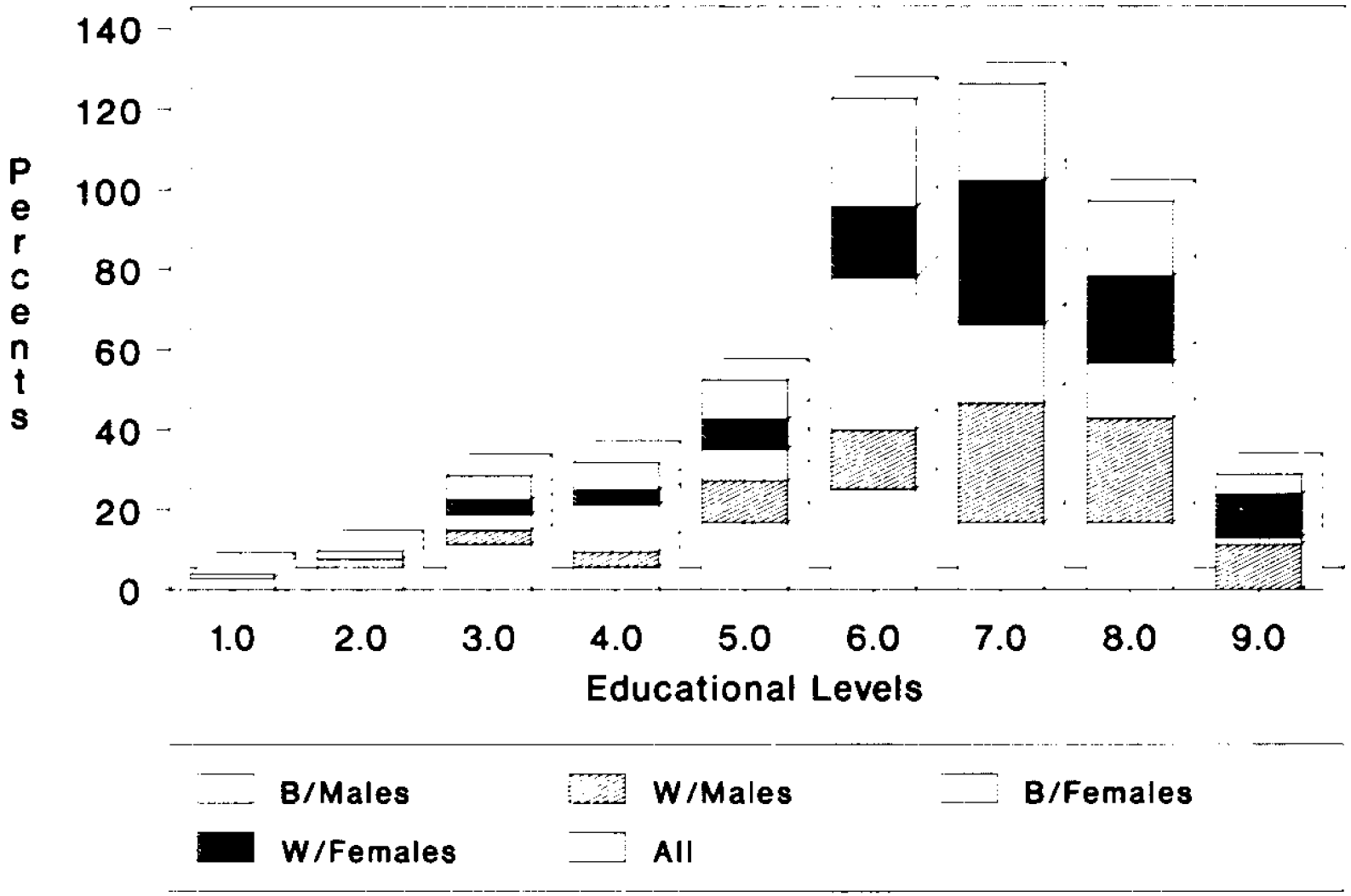


Figure 2 Employment Status by Age Groups (N = 157)

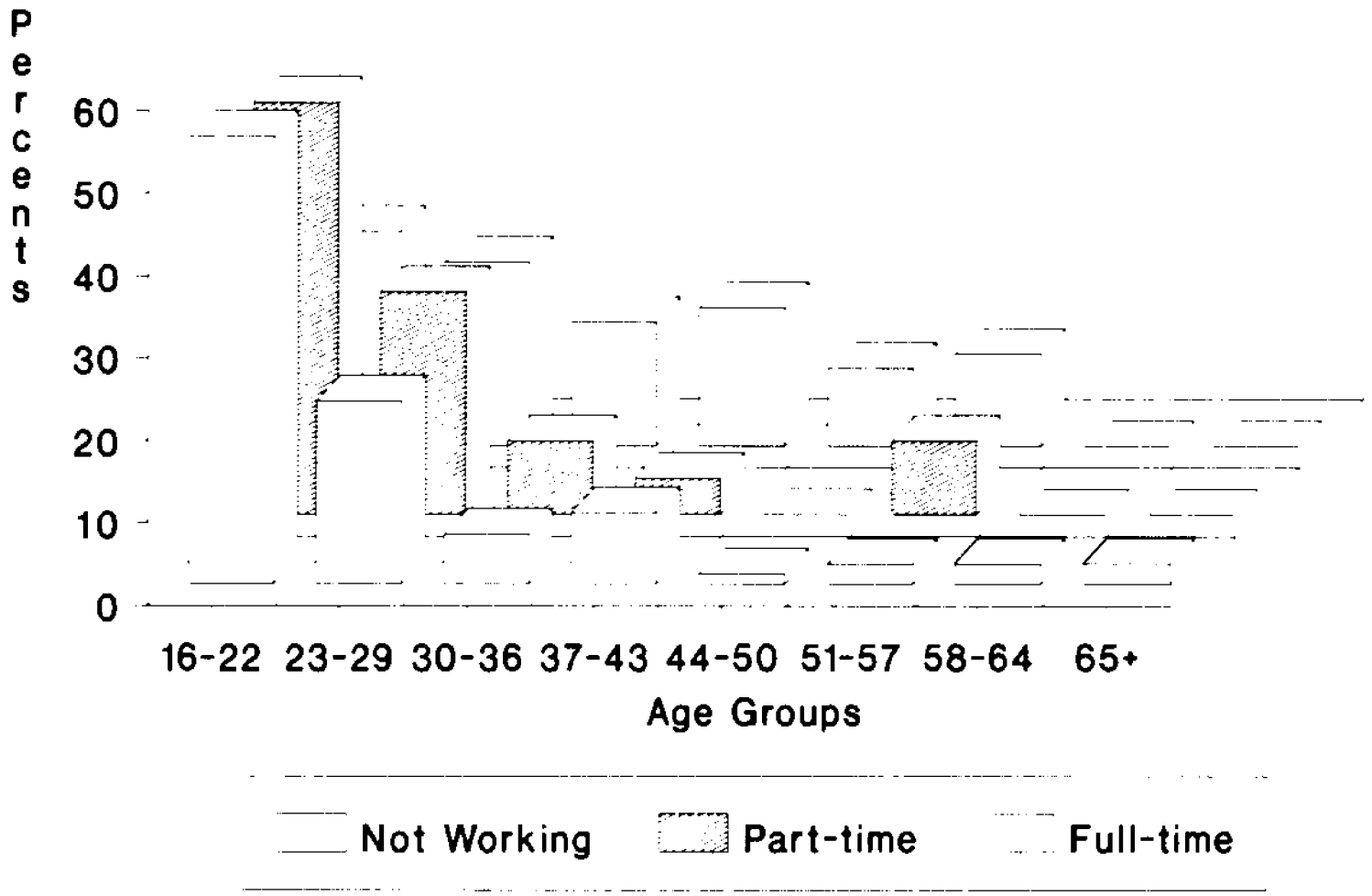


Table 32

Mailed vs Telephone Survey by Gender

	Persisters		Non-persisters		Total	
Gender	n	%	n	%	n	%
Male	60	44.8	11	37.9	71	43.6
Female	74	55.2	18	62.1	92	56.4
Total	134	100.0	29	100.0	163	100.0

Table 33

Mailed vs Telephone Survey by Marital Status

	Persisters		Non-persisters		Total	
Marital status	n	%	n	%	n	%
Single	77	58.3	15	53.5	92	57.5
Married	39	29.5	8	28.6	47	29.4
Separated	3	2.3	1	3.6	4	2.5
Divorced	12	9.1	3	10.7	15	9.4
Widowed	1	0.8	1	3.6	2	1.3
Total	132	100.0	28	100.0	160	100.0

Note. Missing = 3.

Table 34

Mailed vs Telephone Survey by Race

	Persisters		Non-persisters		Total	
Race	n	%	n	%	n	%
Black	77	60.2	17	63.0	94	60.6
White	51	39.8	10	37.0	61	39.4
Total	128	100.0	27	100.0	155	100.0

Note. Race "Other" was not included in the analysis.

Table 35

Mailed vs Telephone Survey by Employment Status

	Persisters		Non-persisters		Total	
Employment status	n	%	n	%	n	%
Full-time	41	30.8	15	53.6	56	34.8
Part-time	19	14.3	3	10.7	22	13.7
Not working	73	54.9	10	35.7	83	51.6
Total	133	100.0	28	100.0	161	100.0

Note. Missing = 2.

Table 36

Mailed vs Telephone Survey by Major Supporters

Major supporters	Persisters		Non-persisters		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Mother	47	35.9	10	38.5	57	36.3
Father	5	3.8	2	7.7	7	4.5
Sibling	6	4.6	1	3.8	7	4.5
Spouse	28	21.3	3	11.5	31	19.7
Boy/girl[a]	14	10.7	3	11.5	17	10.8
Children	6	4.6	3	11.5	9	5.7
Grand[b]	6	4.6	0	0.0	6	3.8
Other	19	14.5	4	15.4	23	14.6
Total	131	100.0	26	99.9	157	100.0

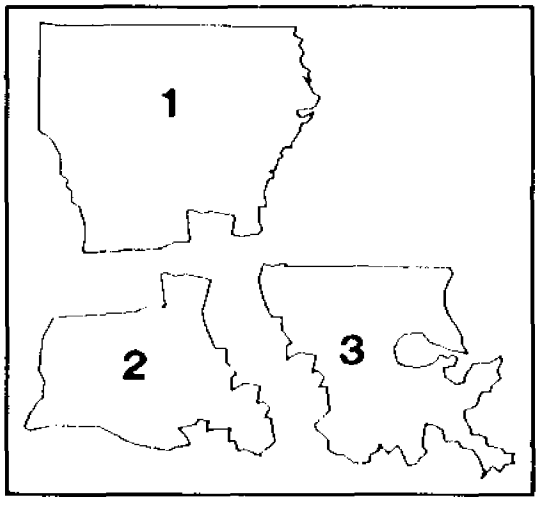
Note. Missing = 6. Boy/girl[a] = Boy/girlfriend. Grand[b] = Grandparents.

APPENDIX F: THREE GEOGRAPHIC AREAS OF LOUISIANA

The three areas were: Area 1, northern region; Area 2, southwestern region; and Area 3, southeastern region as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Three Geographical Areas of Louisiana



The 28 parishes and one school system that comprised Area 1 included: Bienville, Bossier, Caddo, Caldwell, Catahoula, Claiborne, Concordia, DeSoto, East Carroll, Franklin, Grant, Jackson, LaSalle, Lincoln, Madison, Monroe City Schools, Morehouse, Natchitoches, Ouachita, Rapides, Red River, Richland, Sabine, Tensas, Union, Vernon, Webster, West Carroll, and Winn.

Area 2 included 15 parishes. They were Acadia, Allen, Avoyelles, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Cameron, Evangeline, Iberia, Jefferson Davis, Lafayette, Pointe Coupee, St. Landry, St. Martin, St. Mary and Vermilion.

The remaining 21 parishes and one school system were in Area 3. Ascension, Assumption, Bogalusa City Schools, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Iberville, Jefferson, Lafourche, Livingston, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. Helena, St. James, St. John, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, Terrebonne, Washington, West Baton Rouge, and West Feliciana.

VITA

Geraldine "Gerri" Hargrove Holmes is a native of Louisiana. She was Salutatorian of her high school class. Gerri attended Dillard University in New Orleans where she majored in mathematics. She has an Associate Degree in computer science. Her B.S. and M.S. degrees are from Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge.

Gerri's professional career has been diverse including employment with South Central Bell as a long distance operator; Computer Business Management as a computer programming instructor; Baton Rouge General Hospital as Data Processing System Coordinator; and as a freelance computer programmer for nearly 20 years. She has also conducted numerous instructional workshops on computer applications and time management. Gerri is presently the owner of Data Balance, a computer consulting company.

She was granted a research and teaching assistantship in the doctoral program of the School of Vocational Education at Louisiana State University. Gerri is presently Historian and Public Relations officer of the Louisiana Association of Business Educators (LABE) and president of the Vocational Education Graduate Association of Louisiana State University. As an active member of

LABE, she has served as presenter and presider at local and state conferences.

Gerri's husband is William Oren Holmes, Sr. They reside in Baton Rouge with their six children and four grandchildren.

DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

Candidate: GERALDINE HARGROVE HOLMES

Major Field: VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Title of Dissertation: FAMILY SUPPORT FOR PERSISTERS AND NON-PERSISTERS IN LOUISIANA'S ADULT BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Approved:

Barbara C. Holt
Major Professor and Chairman

Kathleen de la Peña McCook
Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

Betty E. Harrison

Joe Katrlik

Jimmie Fuselier

Thomas J. Lasik

S. Kerry MacGregor

Date of Examination:

September 25, 1991